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**ADVENTURES IN
AMERICAN BOOK SHOPS**

BOOKS BY GUIDO BRUNO

Eternal Moments

Sentimental Studies

A Night in Greenwich Village

Fragments From Greenwich Village

The Sacred Band

Moore Versus Harris

Adventures in American Bookshops

To be published in December,

Stories By the Way

A Handful of Contemporaries

Near the Night Lamp

*Adventures in American
Bookshops, Antique Stores
and Auction Rooms*

By Guido Bruno

*Detroit: The Douglas Book Shop
1922*

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One thousand copies of this book have
been printed and the type distributed.

No.

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Preface

THESE sketches appeared originally in Pearson's Magazine, Bruno's Weekly and the Book Hunter, and I make grateful acknowledgment for permission to reprint.

On reading the proofs, I feel I have not done justice to my bookselling friends. I wandered into their shops, I browsed among their books, I listened to their talk and wrote it down . . . pictures not studies, impressions not descriptions. Some of my friends have since passed on to a better world and in these pages will be found perhaps the only record of their useful and laborious lives. This, I believe, is one excuse for the existence of my little book.

In the April issue, 1917, of Pearson's appeared an article of mine telling about that wonderstore of Brentano's in New York about the late Deutschberger and about other old-time booksellers of Fourth Avenue and Union Square. I was unable to procure a copy of this magazine and therefore had to omit this important story in this compilation.

While in Detroit recently I met the charming Mr. Higgins, dean of Michigan's booksellers, and he objected to my statement in one of my articles: "Detroit has not one second-hand Book Shop." I gladly take it back. Mr. Higgins has a whole houseful of gems and 27 packing boxes filled with rare first editions and scarce Americana. His three shops would make our metropolitan friends justly envious. When I wrote years ago about Detroit's bookshops I had not met Walter MacKee, who holds open house in Sheehan's and is not only a good bookman but also a talented comedian. I had not signed my name in Mr. La Belle's guestbook in MacCaullly Brothers' store where authors passing Detroit are made welcome. I had not visited Mr. Dennen's Book Shop, where jeweled prayer books, rare Shakespeare editions, can be had as well as the newest novels and

books on golf. I had not then visited Mr. Proctor's Clarion Shop in Orchestra Hall, the gayest little place, thanks to Mr. Knopf's love of vivid colors. Mrs. Morris, in the Hudson Department Store, created a delightful nook for her book department. Finally, Mr. Gordon came to Detroit as standard-bearer of the Powner's Book Interests, who acquired recently the Reyerson Book Shop. Allister Crowley's beautiful Equinox had something to do with the bankruptcy of this old firm, I am told. Mrs. Gordon, who was Miss Powner before her marriage, is taking an active interest and perpetuating the traditions of a family of booklovers.

And there is Mr. Shaffat's book store on Hastings Street, with its framed letter by the late Roosevelt who purchased here an important book on Africa during the last months of his presidency.

Now I have made amends for my hasty statement. I hope Mr. Higgins will read these lines and accept my humble apologies.

GUIDO BRUNO.

November, 1922.

The Romance of Buying and Selling Old Things

OLD things of all description may lose their value and desirability to their temporary owners, but never to the world. Nothing disappears completely. The smallest piece of tissue paper that has served as a wrapper for an orange and is swept along the sidewalk by a stray wind will ultimately be gathered by some one and again put to some use.

Objects which find their way through the back door of a Fifth Avenue mansion into a rubbish wagon and are carried away will re-appear in some flat of a tenement house as a new and welcome addition to somebody's comfort.

Articles discarded in tenement house dwellings and sold for a few pennies to a ragman are triumphantly brought into the reception room of a patrician mansion, treasured by the new owners, and admired by his friends.

Curious and extraordinary are the fortunes of old objects on their way to a new proprietor with whom they will stay for a while, and their wanderings are eternal.

Old things in New York are sold in magnificent establishments on Fifth Avenue, and they are sold in dungeons on the Bowery. Some people are so poor that they have to buy "second-hand things" to furnish their homes and clothe their bodies. Others are so rich that they are compelled to buy antiques in order to possess something unique.

But the men who deal in old things, whose chosen calling it is to buy and to sell antiques and second-hand wares are the true adventurers among the business men of New York. No matter whether their finger nails and manners are polished and they entertain prospective buyers in luxurious display rooms, or, whether they walk in tenement house districts from door to door, ready to buy anything and every-

thing, or whether they wait for customers in their stuffy shops on Park Row or Baxter Street; they all possess the hope that some day they will make *the* find, and buy for a song something they will be able to sell for a large amount. Not money but the game of hunting after the unexpected, and the thrill in finding it, constitute the lure that attracts the seeker after old things.

The Poor Man's Hunting Ground

There are many people on the streets of New York taken for granted without further question. Have you ever seen early in the morning when people sit around the breakfast table, a cleanly dressed man, with wrapping paper and cord under his arms, walking in the roadway, looking up at the windows of private houses and ejaculating every five or ten paces some inarticulate noises?

If you lean out of the window and watch him you will see him disappear into some of the houses, and if you wait for his reappearance you will notice that his wrapping paper has now become a bundle.

"Cash-Clothes! Cash-Clothes!" Untiringly he cries out these two words at the people who dwell in the houses he passes. Servants frequently answer the call of "cash-clothes" and let the man in through the back door as a welcome buyer of discarded wearing apparel of their masters and mistresses.

What does he do with his purchases?

Once I beckoned to a kindly-looking old man whose wrapping paper was still neatly folded under his arm, to come up to my room. How he ever found my dwelling place among all the other doors of the studio building, is a riddle to me. I answered his knock. He remained quietly standing at the door, his hat in his hand:

"What have you got to sell?" he asked very business-like, taking in the appearance of the room with one glance.

"I have nothing for sale," I told him. "But I would like to know more about your business. I wish you

would tell me what sort of things you buy and what you do with them after you have purchased them?"

"Of course, I am willing to pay you for your time if you will be kind enough to name your price, for say, half-an-hour."

He hesitated a bit, looked around scrutinizingly, and something evidently convinced him that I was "all right." I invited him to take a seat. He said half an hour of his time would be worth fifty cents, I gained more of his confidence by paying the fifty cents in advance and after some more questioning he told me his story and the story of about two thousand other men who are following the same calling in New York.

"I start out every morning at seven o'clock. I take with me all the cash I have in this world, heavy wrapping paper and cord, and then I walk the streets. Just as I attracted you I draw the attention of persons who really mean business. They sell for various reasons; some sell clothes or shoes or bedding or underwear because they need money very badly; pawnshops don't lend them anything on their over-worn clothes, and I am about the only purchaser they can find. Other people want to get things out of the way. They are moving and their trunks cannot hold all the stuff they have accumulated. I buy everything that I can carry.

"No, I have no place of business. I have to turn my money over at once or I should be out of work tomorrow. I walk about picking up stuff until eleven o'clock and then go to Baxter Street and sell.

In the afternoon I go into another part of the city and again buy up as much as I can get and in the evening between five and six, back to Baxter Street."

"What is on Baxter Street?" I interjected.

"That's where all the dealers are. I sell to dealers only and they have fixed prices. For instance, we get from seventy-five cents to one dollar for a pair of trousers without patches, twenty-five cents to fifty cents for patched-up trousers, according to the extent of the necessary repairs. Waistcoats bring fifty cents,

coats from twenty-five cents up to a dollar. Shoes according to their condition, anything from five cents to seventy-five cents. Hats, neckties, shirts, collars; socks bring a few pennies only, according to their attractiveness. Overcoats are in great demand in the cold season. They bring from one dollar up to five dollars. Women's dresses bring about the same prices. I usually make from twenty-five to fifty cents profit on the dollar. Often I make a hundred per cent and often, too, I make a mistake and lose money. Once in a while I pick up a piece of jewelry, but people don't sell jewelry outright. They would rather pawn it, and then sell the pawn ticket.

"I've bought pawn tickets. I paid ten per cent of the loaned amount, but I got stung so often by buying fake tickets that I don't bother with them any more. I know people who go about as I do who make ten and fifteen dollars the day, but I call it a fair day if I clear from three to five dollars. Ten dollars is about a fair capital to start with in buying and selling old clothes, but I know a man who started with fifty cents and in less than a year he owned a shop on Baxter Street.

"Once I had a great day. A man called me in. It was on Forty-fifth Street, and I think he must have been an actor. He asked me to take away all the clothes contained in a big trunk in his room. They were all women's clothes of expensive fabric. I had to come three times before I had taken it all away.

"'How much will you give me for it?' he inquired. All I had in my pocket was twelve dollars. I made him an offer of ten dollars, and I was never more ashamed of myself than in that moment. But he didn't pay any attention to me. He smoked a cigarette and simply said: 'That will be all right, but take it out immediately.' I made bundles and carried it out in portions. I gave him ten dollars. I laid the money on the table, and before I left the room the last time, I said: 'Mister, here are the ten dollars,' pointing to the money that was still laying on the table. 'Take it along, too,' was his answer. 'It would

bring me only bad luck. Take it quickly and get out with you.'

"I got frightened and took the money and went downstairs to the landlady of the rooming house and asked her whether he was 'all right,' whether it was safe to buy the things from him.

"The landlady answered: 'Oh, yes, he's all right, the poor fellow. His wife ran away with some other man only yesterday, and he seems to take it very hard.'

"Another time I found a five-dollar gold piece in a waistcoat that I bought from a Jap in a big house on Madison Avenue. I went back with it, and told him that he had forgotten the five dollars which I found in the garment. He gave me two dollars and a half and told me that I was a damned fool. I am sure the waistcoat and the money had belonged to his master.

"If one wants to take chances, big money can be made in buying old clothes. I have an uncle—he is dead now—peace be with his soul!—who made thousands of dollars. But he was constantly mixed up with the police and had to pay graft on all hands, and lived in perpetual fear that something unfortunate would happen to him. I wouldn't touch such business.

"He went to the Tenderloin and to the bad houses: he knew girls who were living a fast life. He would buy their clothes and their jewelry for next to nothing if they needed money to pay fines in the Night Court, or if they were driven out by the police and had to leave for another dwelling. He would sell those things, perhaps on the same day for a hundred times as much money to other girls who were flush. But the money brought no blessing to him. His son is blind and he himself died of cancer in the hospital, and he was in awful pain to the last moment."

Again I interrupted my visitor, who seemed very generous with his time, and asked him:

"But what happens to the things on Baxter Street after you have sold them to the stores?"

"They go to the four winds," he said, pointing characteristically with his upturned thumb. "People buy them and wear them again; dealers from uptown buy the better things and put them in their shops; there are never enough goods on the market. But why don't you go down to Baxter Street and see for yourself?"

The Open Air Exchange on Baxter Street

Baxter Street is situated in the oldest part of New York. Fifty to seventy-five years ago the houses were private homes occupied by respectable and well-to-do citizens, by merchants after whom streets and places are named today. The street is lined with shops. Clothes are displayed along the house fronts; shoes in long rows lie along the show windows; while boxes with neckties in profusion invite the lover of colors to make a selection. Business is carried on in the street. The stores are dark and seem to serve merely as workshops and store rooms. About noon I strolled down the street and took in the sights which are as confusing as the turmoil in Broad Street during the busiest hours of the Curb Market. Men with bundles on their backs and with pushcarts were constantly arriving. They offered the contents of their packages for sale. Others stood about looking at the various wares and making offers. Dickering was going on in all quarters. Things changed hands rapidly. There was one dark overcoat with a Persian lamb collar which had originally been brought in by a "Cash-clothes" man. The coat was sold to the proprietor of one of these stores and resold at once to a man who had watched the original bargaining. The same coat was thrown upon a pushcart with several other overcoats and sold "wholesale" to a third man who evidently took his purchases out of the district. In a basement I noticed an unusually tall and dignified looking man wearing a sombrero who didn't seem to pay much attention to the buying and selling of his clerks, or were they his sons? He really looked like a Western Colonel, and I christened him at once

"Colonel Baxter." He was very friendly and accessible. He answered my many inquiries: "You see these men with the bundles and pushcarts? They have bought the stuff all over the city, and now they are disposing of it at the best prices they can get."

"I know," I cried, "how they get it. But please tell me what you do with it after you have bought it."

"Come inside with me and I'll show you," was his answer. We descended to his basement. Piles of clothes and shoes lay on the floor, they must have been recently purchased. He opened the door and we entered a veritable workshop. Several gas arms illuminated the room which had a low ceiling. The air was thick and at least ten men and women were at work.

"Here is our laundry," and he pointed to one corner of the room.

"All underclothes, shirts and collars, overalls and linen suits are washed and ironed here. We sell only by the dozen and to dealers uptown."

"Over there is the tailor shop. We clean the clothes which come in, sew on the buttons, press them and make them look as good as possible. We are wholesalers only. We sell old things by the dozen just as factory owners sell new things in large quantities only. But there are many shops on Baxter Street which cater to private customers. This part of the city is frequented by "down-and-outers," men who come from no one knows where. They stay a while; they sleep wherever they are undisturbed, they hang out in our saloons and then they disappear. These men have to buy clothes. They very rarely have money; a quarter is about the biggest sum which passes at a time through their hands.

"These people and their like from other parts of the city are the customers of our shops. A man could get a complete and very decent outfit with a couple of changes of underwear for about three dollars. He can buy a collar for a penny, a necktie from two cents to a nickel, a hat from fifteen cents or a quarter. Our shops here are cheaper than the Salvation Army 'department stores,' and we don't make any pretences to

be charitable or especially kind to people because we sell to them. And we have to pay for things, we don't get them for nothing.

"Before the war, immigrants used to come down on Saturday and Sunday in great numbers and even fairly well-to-do immigrants who have been in this country several years cannot get accustomed to purchasing new things and pay us a shopping visit occasionally. In many countries in Europe the laboring classes seem to be under the impression that they must buy second-hand things to wear. They are our best customers, but they also believe that if we ask a dollar for something we really mean fifty cents, and so, therefore, we have to advance our prices fifty and seventy-five per cent, and if we get a little more than we really expected to get, the time it takes in dicker-ing with these people is worth the money.

"Men and women in all walks of life who have met with reverses steal down to us in the darkness of the evening, afraid to be noticed by someone who might know them, and they buy their overcoats or their shoes."

"But Colonel Baxter," I interrupted him, "to whom do you 'wholesale' your own goods?"

He seemed pleased with the new name I had bestowed upon him, and explained:

"In certain parts of Sixth Avenue, of Eighth Avenue and of Ninth Avenue, there are 'second-hand stores' which cater to a peculiar class of customers. These want snappy clothes, shirts with modern patterns, coats fashionably cut, but they have not the money to purchase them in the shops where such goods are sold. They sneer at cheap clothes cut roughly but made out of good material. They want to appear flashy. You see them on the street corners and in police courts. We supply these stores with their needs. We specialize in everything that they can possibly use."

In the meantime, the open-air exchange on Baxter Street had reached its culmination, voices surged through the air like shrapnel bursting here and there

creating disturbance. Everybody seemed eager to buy, eager to sell, money was exchanged in doorways, on sidewalks, bundles were tossed from pushcart to pushcart. . . . "Much ado about clothing."

The Salvation Army

Of course you have seen Salvation Army wagons on the streets. An elderly gentleman usually occupies the driver's seat. The horse moves on slowly and solemnly as if to the air of a very slow litany. The wagon is loaded with papers and books, with pieces of old furniture, and with bundles of clothing. The wagon proceeds from door to door. The horse stops. The old gentleman descends from his seat, rings the bell of the house and asks:

"Any old things for the Salvation Army?"

You have heard a good deal of the Salvation Army, and so you don't hesitate to turn over some things you cannot use to the wagon. The elderly gentleman in Salvation uniform takes everything he can get hold of. You, of course, think that the magazines are sent to hospitals to be read by the poor lonesome patients, that the clothes are distributed among the needy, and the furniture given to some wretched families who have no beds to sleep on or to others whose hard-hearted landlord deprived them of chairs and tables. Let us take a walk to one of the many industrial homes of the Salvation Army when the wagons come in, and the things are assorted and assigned to the different departments, and you will see what a gross mistake you made by assuming that your gifts are given away. They go to the needy all right, perhaps to the neediest of the needy, but for cash exclusively, and no credit is granted.

Books and magazines are turned over at once to the book department, which conducts a book store on Fourteenth Street near Union Square, not in the name of the Salvation Army, but in the name of the Reliance Book Store. Its employees are experienced booksellers who do not wear the Salvation uniform. In fact, every possible indication that this store be-

longs to the Salvation Army is carefully concealed. Magazines are here sold wholesale to other dealers or retail to you or to me or to anybody. The magazines given to the Salvation Army by charitable people are sold for from five to fifteen cents each. A very well-equipped rare book department attracts collectors from all over the city; "Book Prices Current" is the guide for the sales prices. School books are sold in great quantities. I believe the profit of this shop to be far greater than of any other book shop in the city, as its proprietors do not need to pay for the books they are selling.

There seems to be a good deal of hypocrisy in concealing the fact that the Salvation Army owns the Reliance Book Store. Why not put a sign out that would tell everyone that the books and magazines sold have been received as gifts for the poor and sick by the Salvation Army?

The so-called industrial homes sustain furniture factories where skilled labor is employed to rejuvenate furniture collected by the wagons. Antique furniture dealers have the pick of the really valuable things and hundreds of dollars are often paid for something which has been carted away as junk by the Salvation Army's ragman.

The "Salvation Army Department Store," a sort of a systematized and orderly looking junk shop, contains and displays everything to fit out men and women from head to foot. The things are scrupulously clean, but sold at far higher prices than in the shops of our friends on Baxter Street.

The buyers who come here are mostly people recently picked up by the Salvation Army and employed in some of their shops. They are not treated with the courtesy due to a customer, but with the brutality of a charity worker.

It will not be out of place to interject here a few words about the methods employed by the Salvation Army in recruiting its shopmen. They are unfortunate people out of work without a home, down-and-out in spirit, perhaps just released from hospital or prison.

They receive some food, a bed remembered with a shudder in years to come and they receive a few pennies for work which represents many dollars to the Army. Mental and physical constraint is constantly exercised over them. The discipline of a Salvation Army Industrial Home is very similar to the prison rules of twenty-five years ago. All these broken-down men to whom the Salvation Army "grants a temporary home" were originally promised regular work and employment through friends of the army. Naturally, it is in the interest of the Army to keep them as long as possible, especially if they happen to be good workmen, and only such men are really welcomed with open arms. They will not receive the promised employment as long as the Army can possibly keep them in its own shops. To quit the "home" is synonymous with an escape from prison and usually they are worse off when they quit the Salvation Army than before they went in. The few cents they earned they were compelled to spend in small purchases in the Salvation Army Department Store. Thus the Salvation Army robs unfortunate men and women of the last shred of their faith in humanity.

The Salvation Army is the greatest bargain hunter in New York. Trained bookmen and art experts choose the most valuable among the books and pictures brought in on collection wagons. They employ connoisseurs of bric-a-brac and do a large business with the antique dealers.

Connoisseurs

When a man has made money in America he at once becomes a victim to the craze for an artistic home. The tradespeople with whom he comes in contact in order to achieve his artistic desires speak of art and rugs and paintings. He reads in the newspapers about Mr. So.-and-So who spent thousands of dollars for antique furniture or for pictures in auctions, and he begins his walks on these dangerous and costly grounds where one may buy for goodly sums the ephemeral fame of a collector and a lover of ob-

jects of art. The reputation of an art expert seems to go with the objects as well as the wrapping paper and string.

It is the dream of every antique dealer once in his life to enter one of those coveted garrets where treasures of six generations are stored in boxes, in cases and trunks. To enter this garret at the invitation of some real estate owner or lawyer who represents an estate anxious to sell the house and to clear out the 'rubbish'; to buy the contents of such a garret for a few dollars and to find a painting by Rubens or Tintoretto or Martha Washington's wedding slippers or a suite of magnificent Colonial furniture. . . . sure enough these are red-letter days in the career of almost every antique dealer. Only recently, for instance, in an old garret on Ninth Street, an old Persian rug was discovered which no second-hand dealer would have paid fifty cents for, an expert rug man realized its value, gave eighteen hundred dollars for it in competition with other dealers and sold it to a famous rug collector for twenty-six thousand dollars.

Some time ago a buyer of Marshall Field in Chicago saw a painting in one of the minor art shops of the city. He liked it and purchased it for fifteen hundred dollars. It was marked six thousand dollars and put on sale in Marshall Field's art gallery. It is a standing rule of this art gallery to resell once a year all their purchases. This particular painting seemed unsalable. It was reduced and reduced for a number of years, but it could not be sold. Finally a picture speculator bought it for six hundred dollars, took it back to New York, sold it in an auction sale for ten thousand dollars. The picture was sold and resold eight times during the following six months and ultimately found a final resting place in the mansion of a very well-known man on Fifth Avenue. He paid for it one hundred and eighty thousand dollars.

Not the man who keeps shops and stores has the great adventure in seeking after the old and antique. But people who are "picking up things," attending action sales here and there, visiting junk shops and

second-hand shops all over the city, constantly expecting to find something and never tired or disappointed. I know highly educated men unusually gifted, possessing expert knowledge that in many cases surpasses the "infallibility" of our museum authorities, who prefer the free life of buying and selling to high-priced positions in art shops and in art galleries. I know one man who is "picking up" a living by looking through the book-stalls of dealers and buying odd volumes for small amounts of money and selling the same books to rare-book dealers for as many dollars as he pays cents.

1917

Auctions As Amusement Places

REAL enjoyment of life is caused by life's contrasts. And what greater contrast than to witness Mrs. Astor, for instance, bidding against a second-hand furniture dealer from Second Avenue for a curious crazy-quilt, soiled, torn and catalogued as genuine, direct from some old farmhouse?

Amusement? Galore. And more than that. Studies in human nature, scale exercises of human passions. Everybody has his chance in New York auction rooms. The gambler, the collector, the book hunter, the shrewd dealer, the speculator, the bargain fiend; these auction rooms are a paradise for those who know their own wants, needs and desires. A Dorado for the careful and cautious who have taken advantage of the exhibition on the previous day who have examined the articles for which they wish to bid, who know the condition of the offered wares.

But these auction rooms are a dangerous playground for the emotional, the weak, who really doesn't need the objects on sale, whose eyes and voice seem to miss constantly proper telephonic connections with his central, his seat of thinking. Disastrous prove these auction rooms for those who bid without seeing properly what they are bidding for, who bid higher and higher because perhaps they do not want the other fellow to have the thing, or prompted by pure gambling instinct.

Fascinated by their surroundings, they are easily moved to action; by a look of the auctioneer, by a nod or a word, that places them all at once (though only for a second) in the limelight of public attention. They pay their bills and do not know what to do with their purchases. What a comedy!

Exactly as you know where to go to when you wish to see a musical comedy or an opera, so do I know in what particular auction room I can get a view of human vanity, a peep at greed, an exhibition of plain, delightful collectors' mania.

"Follow the red flag," I would have almost said, but the auctioneers have done away with their old emblem during their recent convention in Rochester. Red flags nowadays are supposed to symbolize revolution, socialism, brotherhood of men, an equal chance for all, and their display is prohibited by city and State legislation. Therefore, blue is now the auctioneer's color, and you must follow the blue flag.

The auctioneers themselves are wonderful entertainers, psychologists of the first rank: Virtuosos, who play wonderful tunes on the emotions of their audience; golden tunes, tunes that turn into gold in the auction-room proprietor's pockets.

"Something for nothing" is ever attractive. There wasn't an American born yet who would not stop, look and listen at the word "bargain."

But then there is a mystery back of it all. You don't know where the things come from. They are jumbled together in the picturesqueness of every-day life; a painting by an old master may be followed by an iron bedstead that only yesterday harbored the maid of some bankrupt actress. Napoleon is supposed to have dined from one of the offered china plates, and a much-worn fur coat is offered ten minutes later.

I love auction rooms without catalogues, without plush chairs, where specialists have not been allowed to separate the goats from the sheep.

"Finds" are rare in our times when every grocer's wife who inherited a library from her great uncle, the preacher, knows more about auction-room prices than the average collector of books; when every push-cart peddler examines his ill-smelling day's collection for antiques.

Books and works of art have become objects of speculation. Daily papers are the sources of information on the prices of values in auction rooms as well as on bonds sold on the stock exchange. And still bargains are found almost daily. Little fortunes are made by buying things in an auction room on University Place and selling them in another one on upper Fifth Avenue.

Here is a little amusement calendar for lonely afternoons:

Do you want to see splendid gowns, magnificent jewels, society manners, etchings of priceless value, paintings, sold for thousands of dollars by the square inch? Witness Mr. Kirby's performance at the American Art Galleries. He is a dignified gentleman: never talks above a whisper: very discreet in advice, but irresistibly urgent in his discreetness. A magnetic fluid seems to emanate from him, and he has the power to direct it properly—believe me!

But what an education to see the great works of great artists put up for public sale: Whistler, Zorn, Degas, Corot, the greatest—and how wonderful to think that they will find an honored place in so many American homes. And the books! Rows of wonderful bindings and old yellowish tomes with broken backs. Rich and poor have an equal chance; and money does not always acquire the most precious, the most coveted prize. Money usually searches for outward beauty; real value is left unobserved in a shabby garment. This is the consolation of the bookworm, but dealers spoil his chances now-a-days. They have learned that it pays to put beautiful clothes on valuable books.

Would you like to see an actor of the old type? Drop in on Mr. Hartmann, in the Fifth Avenue Auction Rooms on Fourth Avenue. Listen to his good-natured talk:

"Madam, you ought to buy this divan," he urges an undecided, elderly lady, who perhaps lives somewhere in the Bronx, in a little flat and wonders how she could get the monstrous divan into her tiny living room. "Let me advise you to take it," Hartmann continues. "You will never have another chance at such a magnificent piece of furniture. If I wouldn't have bought one last week I surely would keep it for myself." Or, he would lift up some old Steins: "I take any bid for these things," and he would give his audience to understand how hard he is hit by prohibition. He knows the dealers among his audience.

"All right, if you don't want to bid any more I will knock it down to one of the dealers who will take it to his shop and sell it to you at an exorbitant profit," is his remark when he cannot get the people interested in some object or another. Every dealer has a nickname with him. There is a second-hand furniture man from Baxter Street, whom he calls General Darrow," much to the delight of the old gentleman who does not look like a general at all. Then there is another one, a very studious looking man, whom he calls "Doctor." Everybody in the audience really thinks the purchaser is a doctor and a collector of valuables. He is a jovial man who makes you feel at home. A sort of old-fashioned cabaret performance. Everybody seems to take part in the show.

If you would like to see a "dandy," who feels one with the best of his listeners, whom he wishes to make out society people of the highest order, listen to Mr. Clark on Forty-fifth Street, near Fifth Avenue. His is a society play with an everlasting ripple of shallow laughter on the surface. The auctioneer speaks with a broad English accent, makes little bows every once in a while, and his right hand reaches instinctively for an invisible monocle. I always wonder if he really wears one. And he sells things. Every one has his own methods. But he is a sort of "bon vivant" on the stage of New York auctions.

Would you like to see an old-time Broadway comedy and an actor with a manner that was in style forty years ago? Would you like to listen to well-set flowery speeches? Get acquainted with Mr. Silo and his auction rooms on Vanderbilt Avenue, near Forty-sixth Street. He wears a cut-away and a goatee. He has the distinction of having auctioned off during the past forty years a greater part of the contents of many Knickerbocker Mansions. He seems to love each and every article that comes before his auction table. Everything is "exquisite, beautiful, grandiose, magnificent, stately." He looks in the ecstasies of an overjoyed connoisseur at his paintings and drawings. He interjects once in a while his sorrow that Mr.

Astor is not alive any more, who would have appreciated at once this or that painting. After such exclamations, he looks with sad contempt over his audience, shakes his head as though he wanted to say: "You poor simps, you do not appreciate real art." He constantly urges: "Don't buy this, don't buy it, please don't buy it. You will do me a favor if you do not buy it, because next week such and such a millionaire collector from California will be in town and he will pay me a far greater price than you intend to offer."

To emphasize his sincerity at least once during each sale, he would get up from his seat, stand erect with the solemnity of a preacher and declare: "If you are sorry to have purchased this article, please return it to me. I am forty years in the auction business; my word is as good as a bond and I will return the money." And he makes good; at least he made good to me. In the folly of the minute I bought something that I had no earthly use for. I told him so and a couple of days later he refunded my purchasing price.

What wonderful tales could the hundreds, often thousands, of gowns, wraps, dresses, suits, slippers, stockings, lingerie, furs, hats, gloves and many other intimate garments of pretty women tell, if they had voices to speak while they hang in long rows in Mr. Flatau's auction rooms on University Place.

Twice a week he conducts an auction of ladies' wearing apparel. Do not think that poor people go there to buy cheap, second-hand dresses; that they slip in shyly, shame-facedly, make their purchase and disappear into their own somewhere in New York. Ladies with limousines waiting outside bargain for and buy evening gowns, while shop-girls purchase impossible dresses. Here you can learn in one hour more about the tastes of America's broad masses than in all the museums, art institutions, shops and exhibitions over town. The grotesque seems to hit old and young, beautiful and ugly, slender and fat. The color schemes scream to the heavens. If an invisible power would grant me the fulfillment of one wish I would ask the good fairy who would make me the

offer: "Please let all these women that were in Flatau's auction rooms last Friday wear the clothes they bought there and assemble them for me in the ball-room of the Vanderbilt Hotel." It would be an unforgettable sight.

And because you were in Flatau's, drop into Koliski's, across the street.

The East Sider is very strongly represented in his back rooms, while in the front, the art dealers and peripatetic gentlemen dealers bargain for everything under the sun that you can imagine. Marble lions that stood in front of a library in East Oshkosh are sold with the same nonchalance as the slippers that are supposed to have been worn by Martha Washington during a reception given to Lafayette. Stately furniture from gambling dens is offered immediately after a series of undertaker's outfits had been sold.

Koliski's is a great exchange of all antique dealers in New York, as well as second-hand dealers. Here the bids go up a quarter at a time. Human emotions are voiced unrestricted by polite considerations. Here is the atmosphere of an old-fashioned arena.

1917

The Strange Discovery and Disappearance of Stuart's Washington

ANTIQUE shops are isles of romance and mystery in the commonplace everyday life of New York, but if you wish to enter into the real thrill of adventure, you must forget the fashionable shop, where antiques have found a temporary resting place and you must not talk to the shop-keeper. Antique shops along Fifth Avenue and the main streets are conducted as up-to-date business places, and up-to-date business has a romance of its own, a twentieth century romance that has little to do with the individual and less with sacred time-honored traditions that touch the heart. Most antique dealers kill the charm their curios and works of art awaken in us.

They know the prices of the beautiful and ugly things on sale in their shops, but they don't know their value. Antique dealers are painful whenever they try to impress you with their knowledge of art or of association or history, or when they simply play on the vanity of prospective customers, telling in whose possession the priceless object has been, quoting prices like stock brokers.

Whenever I spend some time in an antique shop I think of George Bernard Shaw's essay: "On Going to Church": "What wonderful and ideal places would churches be if there were no priests and no services to disturb the sublime quiet and the elevating beauty of the edifices." What charming places for dreams and revery would antique shops be if there were no antique dealers and no ambitious millionaires, who wish to show their appreciation of art by paying exorbitant prices for art objects.

"Then the museum is an ideal place," I hear you say. No, it isn't. The museum is a mausoleum of art. The art objects there seem to me buried forever in costly catacombs with beautiful monuments and tombstones, but buried away from our world, sep-

arated from life forever; yet the beautiful things done by past generations should be a part of our own throbbing life.

The great antique dealers are not the high-priests of the beautiful in New York. Suave and well-meaning gentlemen; their words come not from their hearts and their love is tied to the price of their wares and not to their merit. Some of these gentlemen have sold shoes, shirts, furniture and cash registers before they went into the "antique business." Works of art are mere merchandise to them. Money-changers they are in the temple, but the temple is theirs, too; no one ever can chase them out.

"Names" are their gods. Authenticity their dogma. The art of persuasion their greatest asset. To find big names (names that bring high auction prices) is their constant desire and to sell these names to the highest bidder at fabulous prices is their daily dream.

What do I care who painted a portrait? Perhaps it is a priceless Velasquez or Rubens or Botticelli or by some unknown artist of several hundred years ago? But I like to contemplate the person who sat for the portrait; the beautiful girl in her strange attire; I like to dream about the love, hatred, contempt, affection, about all the hopes and all the despair mutely witnessed by some old-fashioned writing cabinet with secret drawers and dozens of pigeon-holes, where once letters reposed that meant so much to the writers and recipients. I like to think of the soft, well-cared-for hands of some Prince of the church, who wore the beautiful Bishop's ring hundreds of years old that will adorn perhaps tomorrow the jewel-case of an American millionairess.

There are divans and chairs. . . . Who used them? In whose home have they served? Where will they go to from here? The mystery and romance woven around all the various works of art and useful objects that have withstood the destructive powers of time and men is captivating. How did all these things get into the fashionable antique stores?

Most of them were purchased from other antique

dealers; some were bought in auctions and obscure places and a few were purchased from another kind of antique dealer who are not very infrequent in New York.

Where there is mystery there are surely people who wish to solve the mystery, and very curious people are these "detectives of the antique." The peripatetic antique dealers are in a true sense connoisseurs. They prowl about all sorts of out-of-the-way places; storage houses, auction rooms, in garrets of houses that will be torn down and in cellars of old family dwellings, unoccupied perhaps for generations. They sense the value of a thing the moment they see it. Some of them are scholarly gentlemen who have a great book knowledge, who know more than professors in our universities and curators of our museums. Others know by intuition. And a few have the instinct of a Sherlock Holmes and the sense of adventure of a pirate.

Some weeks ago I noted the following advertisement in the American Art News. It sounded mysterious as well as promising:

W A R N I N G !
The Original Sketch of the Head
 for the
Lansdowne Full Length

All Collectors, Museums, Dealers and other interested parties are advised to take no part in the buying or selling of a certain oil painting:—

Portrait of
Washington, by Gilbert Stuart

This portrait head is entirely my personal property. It is now being held by a certain party without my consent, who refuses to return it to me. I wish to warn anyone interested that the present holder of it has not my permission to negotiate its sale and that he cannot deliver title.

Very respectfully,
 J. F. MacCARTHY.
 339 Lexington Ave., N. Y. City.

Any portrait by Gilbert Stuart is worth from ten thousand dollars up. That there should be a new discovery of a Gilbert Stuart painting, especially one of George Washington, was a great surprise to me. And I know J. F. MacCarthy. He is one of those ideal antique dealers who could not help being one. Of course he sells the paintings, engravings and etchings he discovers, but I am sure he would prefer to keep them if circumstances did not compel him to earn a living, even as you and I. MacCarthy is a well-known figure in auction rooms all over town. He is well known down on Fourth Avenue, where old clothes, damaged shoes, cheap furniture is sold, together with works of art, tapestries, paintings, as well as in those fashionable auction rooms on Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue, which look like the orchestra of a theatre, where the visitors sit in comfortable plush chairs.

On Fourth Avenue, the auctioneers urge the people to buy, use all the tricks of their much-maligned trade to bring up the price a quarter of a dollar at a time. In the fashionable parts of the city, the auctioneers are well-posed orators who seem to beg the crowds not to buy because they will get so much better prices tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. These auctioneers are studies in themselves. At any rate they are excellent psychologists. And MacCarthy is their great friend. He knows perhaps more than they do. He gives them valuable pointers and he is such a pleasant chap to talk to because he knows stories and tells them well.

So I went up to his shop, which really is not a shop but a sort of connoisseur's den, and asked him about the "ad" he inserted. "Tell me about it," I cried. "Was the picture stolen from you? How did you ever get hold of a real Gilbert Stuart? How long have you had it? Why didn't you ever show it and where is it now?"

MacCarthy is rather slow in his movements and in his speech. He settled himself comfortably in an old Chippendale chair, supposed to have been owned by

General Beauregarde, and began in his epic manner:

"You did see the picture. I had it almost eight years. I had it long before I moved to Lexington Avenue. I bought it at the James Sutton sale. It was catalogued as a painting by Wertmuller, supposed to represent George Washington. Wertmuller was a Swiss painter of fame, who came to this country about 1790. Washington sat for him and later on he made several copies of the original portrait. His picture evidently didn't interest the public very much during that sale and I bought it for little money. I had it in the shop for years. Many people looked at it, but not one seemed to pay any attention to it. It was not a good painting of Washington; the likeness was rather poor and the whole thing looked unfinished.

"One afternoon last year I was looking for some painting in my attic and there I ran across the Washington portrait. I took it downstairs to this room, where we are now sitting. I looked at it for a good long while, perhaps for the first time since I had bought it, and it struck me as strange that Wertmuller should have painted Washington's eyes as brown, when everybody knows that Washington had blue eyes. The paint seemed very heavy in certain spots and the idea struck me that the whole portrait had been overpainted. I took a little solvent, touched up the eyes and you can imagine how astonished I was to see that the color came off.

"I was very careful, of course, but my interest was aroused. I spent the whole afternoon removing the paint from the eyes. My work was rewarded. Beautiful blue eyes were beneath the coat of paint. I tried the solvent on other parts of the picture and soon I found that the whole canvas had been overpainted. In the course of a week I had removed the entire coat of overpaint and beneath it was an entirely different painting.

"It was a beautiful portrait of Washington, but surely not the work of Wertmuller. I spent another week cleaning it and restoring the painting. It was unmistakably Gilbert Stuart, but it was entirely un-

like any other Stuart picture of Washington.

"I at once went to the library and studied the work of Stuart, comparing carefully all paintings he had ever done with the one in my possession. The pose was exactly the same as that of his "Lansdowne" portrait.

"Lord Lansdowne was a very celebrated connoisseur who met Gilbert Stuart during the artist's sojourn in London and commissioned him to paint a life-size portrait of General Washington in 1796. It is a matter of record that Gilbert Stuart executed this order under grave difficulties.

"France had sent innumerable painters to Mt. Vernon to paint the first President of the new Republic. Hundreds of artists from all parts of Europe came to America in order to paint Washington and on the strength of having painted Washington to receive commissions from the first families of America. Washington had grown tired of giving sittings to all these painters, some of whom were really great artists, but others second-rate craftsmen, who wished to build their reputations upon a Washington portrait painted from life. Gilbert Stuart begged Washington to sit for him again, but Washington had sworn off once for all. Then Stuart used his influence among Washington's friends and finally Mrs. Bingham, a great favorite of George Washington in 1796 and also a great friend of the artist, succeeded.

"The following letter is on record in the Library of Congress:

"Sir:—I am under promise to Mrs. Bingham to sit for you tomorrow at nine o'clock, and wishing to know if it be convenient to you that I should do so, and whether it shall be at your own home (as she talked of the State House), I send this note to ask information. I am, sir, your obedient servant,"

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

"Monday evening, 11th April, 1796."

"Stuart describes in a letter to Mrs. Bingham, Washington's visit to his studio. The great man was

nervous, ill-tempered and considered the whole thing an imposition upon his kindness."

"I give you an hour," he cried after entering the studio. "Tell me in what position you want me and do your work quickly. I am tired and I want to get back home."

Washington's nervousness proved contagious. Stuart became so nervous that he hardly knew what he was doing. He realized that he never could induce Washington to sit again, so he took a canvas and threw in hurriedly Washington's face in broad strokes. He had set all his hopes upon this life-size portrait. He had made arrangements with a steel engraver to have the portrait engraved. He knew that everybody would buy a good portrait of Washington and that his success would not only crown his achievement as an artist but also make him financially independent for the rest of his life.

He made a color sketch of Washington's features as well as he could. It was a short sketch of the head. Later on he engaged three different men to pose for the full length of the body. The Library of Congress retains the correspondence of Gilbert Stuart with Martha Washington, who loaned him a complete wardrobe of her husband, her husband's sword and cape, to be worn by the models.

Stuart's portrait not only pleased Lord Lansdowne but it became *the portrait* of General Washington. The steel engravings in life size were sold out the very week that they had been struck off. Millions of copies circulated all over the world. But the original sketch of the head was lost. Almost every work as well about Gilbert Stuart as about George Washington's portrait contains the notice that the original sketch in colors of Lansdowne has been lost.

"My picture was that very sketch. I proved it conclusively. It would lead too far to tell you about the months of detective work I put in tracing back the proprietors of this painting for the last one hundred and fifty years. I was successful, and of course you can imagine how much the painting is worth.

"One day a well known art dealer of Philadelphia strolled into my shop and I told him the story as I have told it to you.

"‘I will sell the picture for you,’ he said. ‘Give me 50 per cent commission and I’ll sell it quickly.’

"‘I knew the man; he had sold very valuable paintings in the past. In fact, everybody in the art world knows him. I simply cried: ‘Go to it! Get me the best price that you can get.’

"‘He took the picture along with him and that is the last I ever heard of it. I let the matter rest for several months and then wrote him a letter requesting the return of the picture.

"‘His astounding answer came back: He claimed to be half owner of the painting; as I had let him in on the 50 per cent profit-sharing basis he refused to give up the painting.

"‘I went to my lawyer and my lawyer told me: ‘You are stung. That gentleman certainly *did* you. There are only two ways of action open for you. You either sue him for the value of the picture; no doubt you will get a judgment, but I doubt whether you will ever be able to collect on the judgment. And the minute that you sue for the money, you abandon automatically your proprietary rights to the painting. If you would know where the painting is you could replevin it.’”

"‘But do you know where it is?’

"‘I didn’t at the time. Finally this gentleman of Philadelphia made me a proposition to put the painting on sale in one of the most prominent art galleries of New York, who specialize in historic paintings and in old masters.

"‘The proposition was to pay this art dealer a commission of 20 per cent of the prospective purchase price. This proposition made me suspicious. It would mean 20 per cent to the art dealer; 40 per cent to the man of Philadelphia. Two votes against my one.

"‘I realized that I was helpless, therefore I inserted the advertisement. I at least wish to prevent him and his helpers to get the reward for my work, for

my discovery and all the pains I took in establishing the identity of the portrait."

I sympathize with MacCarthy. I wonder where Gilbert Stuart's famous painting will find its last resting place?

1919

In New York Book Shops

EVERY city has its book streets. Book shops are gregarious, and they grow like mushrooms in groups. There is little competition in the book business. No matter how large and complete the stock of a second-hand book dealer may be, his neighbor's collection will be quite different. The clients of second-hand bookshops like to "browse about," they seldom ask for a certain book, and they love to have a large territory in which to hunt.

The location of book streets changes with the growth of a city. Seventy-five years ago the book centre of New York was far downtown on Ann Street; after the Astor Library had opened its doors, Fourth Avenue became the city center and soon was lined with picturesque bookshops. The city grew and Twenty-third Street became the Dorado of the book-hunter. Then people began to make immense fortunes and build palaces and mansions on Fifth Avenue, Central Park was opened to the public. . . . and Fifty-ninth Street became the book street of New York. Ever further the city expanded. Harlem grew in population and One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street is another shopping center for lovers of books and objects of art.

Most of the book dealers kept step with the times. They moved from street to street. The grandfather had been prominent on Ann Street, the son on Fourth Avenue, and the grandson flourishes on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth.

Fourth Avenue has come to honors again during the past four years. Some big book dealers had the idea to move back to old "book-sellers' row," new people soon gathered around them and today most of the second-hand book business of the United States is transacted here on this old street, surrounded by a ramshackle neighborhood, invaded by factory buildings and sweatshops.

But some book dealers could never make up their

minds to move. They stuck to their shops. They are the landmarks of New York's book streets.

The Den of a Pessimist

The Nestor of the book dealers who "have remained" and have withstood the trend of the times is E. A. Custer on Fifty-ninth Street. Right near Park Avenue, next to a livery stable in the cellar of an old-fashioned brownstone house, is his picturesque shop. Large bookstalls with hundreds of books invite you to rummage about, quaint paintings and drawings will arrest your attention and make you stop even if you are in a hurry. Firearms of all descriptions, swords and shining armor add a war touch that seems quite appropriate in our time. If you look closer you see a pale face with keen black eyes behind the show window. You have to look very closely in order to detect it. And if you enter the store you will meet the proprietor of face and store, sitting at his look-out, watching his stalls, scrutinizing the passers-by who stop to glance at his wares. He continues in his position while he is talking to you; he never takes his eyes from his treasures, even while waiting on a customer, or delving into the depths of his shop.

"I have to watch my property," he offers as explanation while excusing himself. "I am listening to what you say," he adds, "don't mind if I don't look at you while we talk. All people who stop out there to look at my books are thieves, and if I give them a chance to get away with my books they prefer to acquire them that way rather than to buy. They steal from earliest childhood and never cease until they are dead. I have been forty years in this very place and I know what I am talking about. And though I am as watchful as a dog, I lose about twenty per cent of the stock that I put in my stalls through thieving. All book collectors are thieves; people who never would think of taking anything else without paying for it must think a bookshop is different from all other stores. Their consciences are not sin-stricken if they incidentally slip a book they like into their pocket and

walk out with it. I have long ceased to read books. I read human nature for my pastime.

"There is not a day that I do not lose books by theft. Take for instance last week. I had a set of Dickens on my stands. A cheap edition on the table where I keep books for boys. I saw a little freckled, red-haired, bare-footed lad inspecting the Dickens books for longer than half an hour. Some time later he came back and looked at them again. This time he had a few books under his arm. He laid his books on the table and managed very cleverly to pick them up after a while together with one of my Dickens books. The boy really wanted to read the book and I let him get away with it. I knew that he was passing my shop every day, and I thought of speaking to him another time.

"The next day he came again, inspected the remaining volumes of my Dickens set for a few minutes, repeated his trick of the day before and stole another volume. He came every day and acquired six of the seven volumes. It was only on Saturday that he stole the sixth volume; this time I went after him, told him sternly to come back with me, handed him the seventh volume and said to him:

"'Here, my boy, I don't keep open on Sunday, and somebody might buy this one and spoil your set. Better take it along. You have the right spirit. Continue and one of these days you will find yourself a millionaire. Perhaps then you will endow libraries.'

"Or the old Irish woman whom I caught only yesterday. She came with a basket covered with newspapers, examined my books very carefully, and dropped every once in a while one of the books in her basket. I waited until the basket was filled, then I told her to come inside of my shop; I emptied the basket and handed it back to her. I didn't say a word. She took her basket and went outside.

"Well-to-do-looking men come in, examine books, tear out plates, and walk out again without buying a penny's worth of my stock.

"I don't think they are all bad at heart. They

simply don't look at books as merchandise and if they can get something for nothing, they take it. Women are the worst. Especially those modern women who write and try to reform humanity. They are quite shameless and do anything as long as there is a slight chance of getting away with it."

"But," I interjected, "mustn't it be dreadful to sit in your shop day after day as a sort of watchman?"

"I'm accustomed to it," he answered, "and that's the only way I can make my business pay. It was not always so. There was a time when people really loved books and bought them in order to read. Then they had time to read. The successful man of today has an automobile, has to go out joy-riding after business hours, has to spend his time in cabarets and road-houses. He needs books only as decorations when he buys a home or furnishes an apartment. And then he leaves it usually to his decorator to choose the most attractive and expensive bindings in keeping with the color scheme of his library.

"I tell you, New Yorkers don't know books, don't want to know them. The men read newspapers, the women magazines, and the young people trashy novels. Of course there are our modern book collectors. They know as much about the commercial values of books as I do. They buy books as an investment, just like pictures. They follow the auction sales and gamble in books. You can hardly call such people booklovers. Thirty years ago I used to have comfortable chairs in my shop and in the evening big business men, lawyers, and physicians would drop in and examine at leisure some tomes that I had laid before them because I knew they were interested in this or that subject. Today most of the men who are interested in books are so poor that they can hardly pay their room rent."

And then he proceeded to show me some of his treasures. "Who do you think buys this sort of books in our day? Dealers, nobody but dealers. And they sell them again to dealers. Finally they find their

way into the auction rooms and are bought again by a dealer."

Mr. Custer has traveled all over Europe and is a lover of beautiful paintings. Original Corots, Millets, original drawings by Aubrey Beardsley lean against piles of books, hang in cobwebbed corners. "Are you not afraid that someone will steal them?" I asked him, commenting on his carelessness.

"They don't know enough," was his answer. "Some months ago I had a wonderful painting of Corot's in the show window. A man whom I knew as a notorious miser came in and asked if it was genuine. I said in a matter-of-fact way that I have no proof but the picture, and that I would sell it for one hundred and twenty-five dollars. I myself had paid for it three thousand. He looked at it for a long time and then said he would come in again. The following day he brought his wife and brother-in-law to look at it. They examined it very carefully and went out. The following week I sent the painting to an auction sale where it realized eight thousand eight hundred dollars, notwithstanding the bad times on account of the war. On the very day that I received my check in payment for the picture, the man came in again and proposed to buy it for one hundred dollars. I showed him the check, and it pleases me even today to think how disappointed and crestfallen he was; because I never told him that I would not have sold him the picture even if he had given me a hundred and twenty-five dollars at the time I offered it to him.

"I have my worries, but I also have a lot of enjoyment watching my contemporaries and noting their faults."

Mr. Custer is a small man with a kindly smile, and after I saw him chatting with the ragamuffins swarming around his bookstalls, and talking kindly to a girl who wanted some information, his piercing dark eyes did not seem so very misogynic and his pessimism seemed of the kind of the dog who barks but does not bite.

A Whitman Enthusiast

Little Max Breslow, who isn't taller than a good-sized doll and has such tiny hands that he can hardly hold two books at the same time, is so vivacious and young looking that everybody must like him if for no other reason than his continuous smile. He is the last of his guild on Twenty-third Street. Max sold books since his earliest youth; he sold his school books. When a boy he used to go about "picking up" books and selling them to book dealers; he started in as apprentice in an out-of-the-way bookshop on Eighth Avenue, and then opened up the cellar which he has made so attractive since.

As neighbors he had the potentates of the second-hand book market, Mr. Schulte and Mr. Stammer, both of whom have moved to Fourth Avenue since, and many other less important sellers of books who have dispersed in all directions during these latter years. He loves Twenty-third Street and intends to stick there till the last house is transformed into a factory. You almost fall into his shop from the street, so steep are the stairs and tread-worn. He has the instinct of the born second-hand book dealer to find out-of-the-way books on out-of-the-way subjects. There is always something unusual in his shop and his prizes are within the reach of the poor man's purse. He likes his books and he likes to sell them to good homes. And therefore he often fits his price to the purchaser's purse. His hobby is Walt Whitman. He has the most famous collection of Whitman items in this country, even larger and more extensive than the one Horace Traubel has guarded. He has original manuscripts of Whitman, proof sheets of his books, everything that was ever written in any language about Walt Whitman, more than four hundred pictures of the "good, gray poet," and you couldn't buy one of those precious things for any money in the world.

An Optomist

Frank Bender, who is considered at present one of the leading second-hand book dealers of Fourth Ave-

nue, and that means of the United States, is an entirely self-made man, and his career is unique even among book dealers. Only five years ago he started his shop, without books, without money, and without knowledge. In a short time he acquired all these three essentials, and here is his own story:

"I used to sell books to architects on the road, architectural year-books and magazines, and later I added books on decorations which I sold to decorators. It occurred to me one day that I could save rent if I opened a shop where I could sell enough books of all kinds to pay expenses. That was five years ago. I signed a lease for a little one-story building that stood where the new post-office on Fourth Avenue and Thirteenth Street is at present. I sold enough architectural books to pay my first month's rent and to buy lumber to fix up my shop. I literally built up my own business. I laid the floors, built the shelves, the tables. My shelves remained empty because I had no money to buy books. One day a friendly print dealer came along who must have taken interest in and pity on me. "Why don't you hang some prints around your shop to fill out the wall spaces?" he asked. "It will make it look better. I have a bunch of prints I will sell you for forty dollars and I'll give you six months' time in which to pay it."

I accepted his offer, and those prints netted me over five hundred dollars in a surprisingly short time. If one keeps a bookshop something unusual happens almost every day. It is the uncertainty of the book business that always attracts me. Of course every book dealer who wants to make a decent living must have a specialty of his own. Mine is architectural books. I have a large clientele of architects and decorators; I know these books well, and they were the backbone of my business. Chance and good luck are the great factors in the book dealer's life. Let me tell you a few instances:

"A few months after I opened my shop at the time of the big auction sales, I felt very gloomy. Of course I needed cash in order to buy books, and I

did not have it. One morning one of my best customers walked into my shop and asked for a copy of Canina's Ancient Rome. I told him that the book was so scarce that there was no use to ask for it. 'Well,' he said, 'I am willing to give you two hundred and fifty dollars for it any time you bring me a copy.' The very same afternoon I noticed a copy of the book in an auction catalog to be sold the next day. I went to the auction and sat there shaking like a leaf, waiting for the first bid after the book was put up. Nobody seemed to be interested to buy it. Somebody bid five dollars, and I got it finally for six dollars and seventy-five cents. I had it wrapped up, took it around the corner to my customer and collected two hundred and fifty dollars. That was the first real money I made, and it gave me a chance to acquire better books.

"Take only yesterday. I was very busy writing when a man who introduced himself as a rag paper-dealer, offered me linen-bound copies of a historical encyclopedia for seven and a half cents a volume. I didn't even want to spend time talking to him, and so I declined abruptly. 'I have many thousands of these books,' the man insisted, 'make me an offer.' He went out and, strange to say, came back in a half hour with a cart-load of the books and said to me, 'Here they are.' The books proved good sellers and I made a pile of money. The people that come into my shop are my only source of information. They all tell me what they know about the books they are interested in. I love to talk to them, even if they seem to be cranks. No, I don't mistrust them. They are welcome to make themselves at home in my place. I believe that everybody that enters my shop is just as honest and straight as I am myself. Only once, after I had lost a valuable book in a mysterious way, I became suspicious. I was busy talking to some customers as a man entered whose looks I did not like. He busied himself with some fashion books at the back of my store. I grew so nervous about him that I approached him quite roughly with a question, 'What is it you

are looking for?' He answered, as I thought guiltily, naming the title of a certain fashion book that I happened to have in stock. I brought it out, he examined it and asked the price. It was seven dollars and fifty. The book had cost me five dollars. He said that he could not pay seven fifty for the book. 'If he really wants to buy the book,' I thought, 'and didn't come in here to steal, he will purchase it for three fifty.' I firmly believed that the man did not have ten cents in his pocket. I offered the book for three dollars and fifty cents. 'At this price, I take it,' he answered. I lost one dollar and fifty cents, but regained my belief in humanity."

A Gambler

On Thirty-fourth, near Lexington Avenue, Jerome Duke has opened a bookshop of a peculiar sort. It is not exactly a book shop because there are antiques and curiosities all over the place. The books are thrown together topsy-turvy, Latin authors, modern novelists, theological books, old French tomes and German philosophers. I asked the proprietor about his books and his answer was:

"I don't know anything about them. I never read books and would not be bothered with them. I buy them at a certain price and I try to sell them at a profit. In fact, I intend to buy anything I can get cheap enough, no matter what it is. I went into the book game in order to gamble and I am going to gamble on anything that people bring in here.

"There is one thing I have just refused to buy because the man wanted too much for it. He said that he had recently returned from Europe, had been a soldier, and wanted to sell me the embalmed finger of a German general. I forget the name of the general, but the man said that it was authentic and that he would sign a document before a notary public, swearing that he had been present at the time the finger was cut off of the general's hand. Now, if he had asked fifty cents or a dollar, I would have been willing to take a chance, because it would make a good window

display in this time of war; but he wanted five dollars, and I couldn't see my way clear. That's too much of a chance, to stake a five-spot on an embalmed finger of a German general. So I bought a slipper instead. It belonged to a Madame Jumel, and she is supposed to have worn it on the day that she got her divorce from Aaron Burr. I paid a dollar for it and I consider it a pretty sound gamble."

"How so?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "because Aaron Burr was the second Vice-President of the United States." Of course that argument was final, and I wished him luck with his purchase.

II.

Strange to say, most of the bookshops in New York with individual appeal are modern places only recently established, and their proprietors young, often very young people. Most of them are up-to-date business men who had their training in different lines. They were lovers of books, they realized the possibilities of a "bookshop with a soul," they opened shops after their own hearts, and are meeting with success.

The Oxford Book Shop

Alfred Goldsmith's is the youngest of New York's book shops. This is to be found on Lexington Avenue near Twenty-fifth Street, in an old-fashioned basement, with pillars and nooks, near some of the oldest auction rooms in the city, just the place for a book shop.

Shelves all around the walls filled with a few thousand well-selected books, comfortable chairs to sit in here and there, a sacred case of first editions, all other books well dusted and in neat rows, modern authors mostly, scarce translations of authors whose names, perhaps, you have never heard before, but who will be your good friends when once you have made their acquaintance.

Mr. Goldsmith is a young man, a college graduate with a successful business career in the print paper industry behind him. He always was a great reader and buyer of books. One day this fall he decided to open a book shop, and to get married. He did both, and is well satisfied with both ventures.

Book collectors are gifted with a sixth sense. It is not necessary to send them announcements. Some day they are sure to drift in, and if the atmosphere is congenial they come again and again.

"I love books," said Mr. Goldsmith, who is a great philosopher and an excellent talker. "Book selling is a game. The sort of books I am selling are hard to be found, and quite easy to sell. My great pleasure is to go about town picking up my books. Once I

place them for sale on my shelves they quickly go. It is wonderfully interesting to observe the people that come in here to buy books. Of course you know all about the peculiarities of collectors. But since I have opened my shop I have discovered some new species of book shop habitués. Let me tell you about them.

"There is Mr. Pimple, a big, stout, uncouth man of about thirty, who looks like a butcher and pretends to be a highly educated lover of books. His specialty is the autograph game. He writes letters to living authors which read something like this: 'In a treasured niche of my favorite book shelf in my library, is a volume that I prize more than any other book. It is your novel. You would earn the eternal gratitude of an old book worm if you would have the goodness to autograph it for me.' The author receives the letter and imagines some old devoted book crank, autographs the copy, and returns it to Mr. Pimple at his (the author's) own expense. Mr. Pimple makes the rounds of the book dealers and sells his treasured autograph copy to the highest bidder. Worse than that, he throws the very letter which he received from the author, promising the book, into the bargain. Gertrude Atherton, Richard Le Gallienne, Katie Douglas Wiggins and many others have autographed whole sets, forty and fifty books at one time, for Mr. Pimple, who went so far as to take advance orders for such sets.

"How little he really thinks of the authors to whom he sends his stock admiration letter the following story evidences: One day he asked me if eight books of Upton Sinclair, first editions, would bring good money if autographed by the author. I answered in the affirmative. Pimple looked up the address of Sinclair, wrote him, received a favorable reply and found that it would cost forty cents to send the books by parcel post to Pasadena, Cal. 'Too much money,' he remarked. He tore out the fly leaves, sent them on, Mr. Sinclair autographed them, Pimple pasted

them carefully back into the books and sold the whole set on the very day.

"But the best trick was the one he put over on the publishers of Ambrose Bierce. After Bierce's disappearance, collectors were hot after his first editions and autographs. Bierce's publishers had a good many letters and presented one to each purchaser of the author's collected works. Mr. Pimple paid them a visit, talked for more than an hour of his admiration for Bierce, mentioned once or twice that circumstances did not permit him to purchase one of the sets, and finally declared that the ambition of his life was to own a letter in the handwriting of 'the greatest writer and artist in the world.' The sincere enthusiasm of Pimple, his insistence, the pleading of poverty, finally induced the publisher to give him a short letter of Ambrose Bierce as a gift.

"'I will never part with this treasure. I will always carry it in my portfolio, near my heart,' were his parting words. He came directly to my shop and told me the story. We were talking about Bierce as a customer entered and soon took a hand in the conversation. 'I'd like to get a letter of Bierce,' he explained. 'I would be willing to pay seven dollars and a half for a short note in his hand.'

"I hardly believed my eyes! Mr. Pimple took out his portfolio from near his heart and offered his treasured letter of Bierce for the seven dollars and a half.

"This man is known to every rare book dealer in the city. And he isn't the only one of his clan. He is tolerated because he produces inscribed copies of authors that are hard to get.

"Then there are the habitual book thieves, whom I love to watch. I once had an occasion to do a friendly turn to one of these gentlemen who are on our blacklist. He calls himself Van Southall, and in an outburst of gratitude he made the following confession: 'I like you, Goldsmith. You don't need to be afraid of me. I'd never take anything in your shop. It is quite different with other dealers. Why shouldn't I take advantage of them. If I can slip something in

my pocket it is my own business and their lookout. But you can feel quite safe. I know that you are an ambitious young man who loves books and I should never harm you.'

Mr. Goldsmith reads a great deal, books as well as human nature. He rarely makes a mistake in suggesting books to his clients. He likes people who write books, he likes their personality, and no author can find a better apostle than Mr. Goldsmith, provided he is congenial. If you wish to know what authors Mr. Goldsmith does not like, look at his ten-cent stand in front of the shop. Extraordinary values can be had there for one dime, because Mr. Goldsmith does not like the books.

Washington Square Book Shop

Just a while before the time when certain people got the ambition to own a tea shop in Greenwich Village, the very same people thought it the aim of their lives to be the proprietors of book shops in the vicinity of Washington Square. Still more ambitious were they. They wanted to print their own books. The Boni Brothers (now Boni and Liveright) started their *Glebe* magazine there, and published pretty little books by all sorts of authors; Kreymborg here printed his booklets; and many others, whose fame was too short lived to be recorded, half a dozen of them. One sold out to the other and finally Egmont Arens purchased whatever there was left from pretty Renee LaCoste. His became *the* bookshop of the neighborhood.

Arens is a born publisher, a litterateur, himself, a connoisseur of good books, and an excellent business man, to boot. So he became the first successful business man in Greenwich Village. His shop is crowded with intellectuals from the whole town. He invites geniuses as well as buyers of books. His series of plays—there are seven of them published to date—are the first plays of men who are making their way in the great theatrical world, and who gave life for a time to the Little Theatre movement in New York. Arens is a good business man, as I said before, and so he

recently purchased a printing plant and is printing his own books. His Whitman book is the best on the market, and his next publication shows his daring spirit.

To publish a verbatim translation of Arthur Schnitzler's famous "Reigen," is surely a courageous undertaking in our times of Comstockery, Sumnerism and superprudery. These ten dialogues caused a considerable stir throughout the civilized world. They were translated into every language, including Japanese, but excluding English. No English or American publisher cared to give these exquisite silhouettes of real life to the reading public.

Some months ago a young writer who is known for his imbroglios with the vice censor (from which he invariably emerged as victor) gave a private reading of the plays before an invited audience. Arens was there and at once decided to undertake the publication.

"The publisher ought to be a book seller and should spend most of his time in his book shop. That is the only way to feel the pulse of the reading public," is Mr. Arens' motto.

It isn't a bad maxim for a modern American publisher.

A German Bookseller

High upon Lexington Avenue, near Fifty-seventh street, is the book shop of Mr. E. Weyhe. His specialties are books on art, rare prints, etchings and books on laces.

"I am a German," said Mr. Weyhe. "I can't do anything about it. I simply have to make the best of it in these times of war. I always have been a bookseller. I was an apprentice to a bookseller in Germany, and I learned the trade in the old German way. I worked from six o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night for three long years. I loved to travel and was employed in shops in Germany, Italy, and finally I settled in London. There I opened a shop. Unfortunately for me the war broke out. I had to close up and the next best thing to do was to

come over here. The British Government most courteously gave me permit to leave, and I will never forget the kind words of the policeman who took me to the steamer: 'I hope you will soon come back and not stay in America'."

Mr. Weyhe caters to moneyed collectors exclusively. People who buy books on laces for \$250.00, or a history of Sir Joshua Reynolds' work for \$350.00, people who want rare things and to whom money is no object. He is a friend of the artist and writer, who are welcome in his shop, to whom he lends books on chance acquaintance, because he believes in human honesty and has unbounded faith in his fellow-men.

"People trust me. Why shouldn't I trust them," was his simple remark. It seems quite wonderful to think that Mr. Weyhe came to America four years ago as a refugee and without funds, and owns today a choice stock of the rarest books, the confidence of his clients and credit wherever he desires it.

Mr. Gerhardt's Den

Opposite the library on Forty-second Street, high up in a medium sized sky-scraper, is Mr. Gerhardt's den. Christian Gerhardt is a specialist in out-of-the-way books by out-of-the-way authors. He issues catalogues every month, and these catalogues are indexes of curiosities of literature. Pamphlets by well known authors, perhaps their first literary products, books by fanatics, and by poets whose songs were never known by the world. Individualistic magazines of whose existence you have never heard, fill long rows of his book shelves. But whenever I think of Mr. Gerhardt I remember that unhappy singer of our East Side, of Zoe Anderson, who called herself the "Queen of Bohemia," who founded the Ragged Edge Club, and presided for years at its unique sessions in the "old Maria." Miss Anderson struggled for years with printers, paper dealers, and news companies in order to give us her little magazine. *The East Side*, a fearless, free-lance sheet, in which she attacked everyone and everything. The champion of the out-

casts and sweatshop workers of the East Side, living among them, writing about them with greater understanding than any contemporary writer, poor Zoe ended her own life as cheerfully as she had lived after telling all about it in the then current and last issue of her magazine. Zoe Anderson had been a well known newspaper woman on the staffs of many metropolitan papers, including the *New York Times*.

Gerhardt was her lieutenant, the moving spirit of her Ragged Edge Club, master of ceremonies of the jolly dinners she used to give, and master of ceremonies at her funeral, where they carried out her last wishes: The same band that had played merry dances for her while alive, played the same merry dances during the burial ceremonies. "The East Side is mournful enough. I have always tried to make them happy. Let them be merry to the tune of gay music while they are burying me," were her own directions.

Gerhardt became her literary executor and her few books, together with bound copies of her magazine always occupy a place of honor in his den.

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III.

FORTY-SECOND Street loses its brilliance on Seventh Avenue and shows all the way down to the West Side ferries the sad degeneration of a New York street that was once a fashionable residence section. Glaring electric signs from Fifth to Seventh Avenues. High life after dusk. Eighteen theaters. Cabarets galore. The amusement center of the metropolis around Broadway. The seat of learning in one whole block on Fifth Avenue. The moment you cross Seventh Avenue, cheap rooming houses, tenement dwellings, sweat shops. Wealth and poverty rub elbows. Puritanical decency on the borders of the city's mire. Lunch rooms, garages, plumber shops, dirty Jewish and Italian groceries, loan brokers' offices, everywhere signs "Rooms to Let," gaudily dressed women emerge from dark house entrances on whose stoops laborers read their evening papers. Children everywhere, ragged, uncared for children.

In the midst of this typically American panorama, pinched in between a repair shop and a restaurant, is Mr. Lawson's book store. He sells books, too, but I would rather call his place of business an "intellectual exchange."

"How can you sell books in this neighborhood?" I asked of Mr. Lawson on my first visit to his shop. I knew him a dozen of years ago in Chicago. He's a book man of the old school. He knows books, is well read, well known among the members of his guild. Americana had been his specialty and many a scarce and rare item had he discovered in days gone by.

"What a strange place you have selected here in New York."

"Stick around for a couple of hours and you will see yourself that book stores of my brand are actually needed in this sort of neighborhood in New York," was his off-hand answer, while he continued counting green and yellow tickets, assorting them by their colors.

"What are they?" I asked.

"Coupons," was the answer. "All these people in my neighborhood insist on getting coupons with all their purchases. So-called profit-sharing coupons. They get them with their cigars, with their soap, with their butter, with most of their victuals. Each of these coupons represents a certain cash value. Here in this catalogue," and he showed me a voluminous book with many pictures, "you can see what they can exchange for their coupons if they choose to save enough of them. Here lies the point. They never save enough of these coupons. Most of my customers live from hand to mouth, often they are in actual need of ten or fifteen cents. I buy their coupons. At other times, again they come down here to buy coupons in order to complete the needed number of the slips and to exchange them for some household article, but mostly for 'gifts.' You would be surprised how they like cheap bric-a-brac, phony jewelry and most of all, cut-glass—imitation cut-glass, of course. Most of my business is done after 6 o'clock in the evening.

"See the music rolls over there? A player-piano concern established some time ago a branch in this section and got rid of hundreds of instruments. And whenever the people need money they bring me their music rolls. I pay a few cents for them. But that's just what they need. They sell them on Thursday and Friday. On Saturday, after they receive their pay checks, they buy new ones. It is a part of their life's routine."

An old woman came in with a bunch of magazines, Mr. Lawson bought them for a few cents.

"She keeps a rooming house," he explained. "Her roomers are cheap comedians, who never stay longer than a couple of days or so, and always leave magazines when they move. She sells them. She also sends her roomers down to me to buy magazines if they get lonely in the evening and inquire for something to read.

"You see that man?" and he pointed to an old fellow who was examining carefully a big heap of magazines. "He's the news dealer from the corner. He

runs in several times a day and buys lots of magazines. The American News Company grants him the return privilege on certain magazines for 30 days and others for 60 days. He buys any standard magazine of the current week here for a nickel, some even cheaper, and then he returns them to the news company at full value. For instance, he buys a 20-cent magazine for a nickel and the American News Company credits him with 15 cents upon its return.

"There is nothing on earth that you can not sell in this neighborhood, and on the other hand, you would be constantly surprised what people will offer you for sale."

The store was crowded. Boys wanted detective stories, women dream books, foreigners dictionaries, somebody was trying records on an old phonograph in the back of the store. A woman who still showed traces of great beauty wanted to get rid of hundreds of photographs of herself, showing her in exotic stage costume.

"But how about these oil paintings?" There were some magnificent pictures in one corner and really good books right next to trashy novels. "That's the other side of my book business," answered Lawson. "Dealers come in from all parts of the country and I have the whole day to myself to attend auctions, to visit collectors. A good many gems have drifted in here. Doesn't it look like a junk shop? And I dare to say that very few dealers in New York have such valuable books, autographs, prints, paintings and etchings as I have at times right here among all this junk."

A procession of strange people continued to pour in. Everybody bought something, sold or exchanged something, half a dozen languages were talked simultaneously and the cash register rang merrily through the noise and constant chatter.

"There must be lots of money in this novel game of yours?" I asked of Lawson. "Of course there is," he answered cheerfully. "The individual purchases are small, but judge for yourself how many people are

coming in and then don't forget that every one of them is a steady customer, coming down here almost every other day. Buying or selling, but I am always the winner. And I dare say that these people would miss me. I provide for them amusement, pleasure, and even education, and do they not come to me in their need?"

Casement's Book Emporium

Book stores, like mushrooms, never grow solitary. Only a few doors south is another book store. Nothing but books and magazines. Mr. Casement is the proprietor. Somebody told me once that Mr. Casement is a second cousin of Sir Roger Casement. But Mr. Casement denied any relationship with the great Irish patriot. He could not deny, however, his Irish origin. "I sell magazines mostly to my neighbors here, detective stories to the boys and Meade's books to the girls. But the dealers from all over town come here and pick out whatever they want."

All his books are alphabetically arranged and I don't wonder that many a scarce book can be found amongst his stock. Mr. Casement is a solitary figure among the book dealers of New York. Very silent, always kindly, smiling, obliging and unassuming. Often in the twilight, when he drinks his cup of coffee, and eats his herring with rye bread, I love to drop in and watch his self-content and real satisfaction with his life and with his lot. He is the only happy man among all the book dealers in New York—from hope and fear set free—content among his books.

The Madison Book Store

The only uptown book shop that keeps open in the evening. The visitors here are quite different from those on 42d street. But I guess they are as lonesome and often as helpless as the people who come to Mr. Lawson's shop. There are the strangers from the big hostleries on Fifth avenue, the girls from the Studio Club, and a good many physicians from the nearby clinical buidlings. Mr. Alexander A. Salop is the

master of the mansion. A young man, studious looking, perhaps because he wears eye glasses. A shrewd business man but books are not only merchandise to him. He reads much in several languages, has his likes and dislikes in literature and keeps always a great variety of modern German and French books. A little room in the back of his shop is consecrated to the bookworms. A few comfortable chairs, reading lamps, library tables, it looks very homey and too inviting to simply buy and go. Peter Stammer, who calls himself "The Original New York Book Hunter" and who knows *the* book if it was ever printed anywhere and at any time in this world, comes here often in the evening to pick up books, but mostly to chat, to "swap" experiences.

Mr. Stammer ought to write his memoirs for the benefit of contemporary literature. Here are a few interesting bits gleaned from him several days ago:

"Did you ever know," he asked, "that Henry James had a sister? She must have been a literary woman of great ability. About 40 years ago I was a typesetter in an English town. I remember the most curious job I ever had to do was a book by Miss James. It was a sort of autobiography most extraordinary. A big book of several hundred pages, very intimate and outspoken. Only three copies were to be printed. The type was destroyed and even the proof pages had to be returned. I wonder what ever happened to that book. I wish I could have made a copy of its contents. I set up the first edition of Oscar Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol.' That was in Boston while I worked for Benjamin Tucker.

"You would naturally think that a book printed in many millions of copies could never become scarce. I thought so, too, until I ran across a poem by Bret Harte, his *Excelsior*. I didn't find the poem among his collected works. Bret Harte collectors didn't seem to know of its existence. I started inquiries to investigate and I found that this poem had been written as an advertisement for a well known soap, had been printed in millions of copies, distributed free of

charge all over America. Curious enough, my copy was the only existing one outside one in the files of the soap concern."

Mr. Stammer knows books and people so well, has met so many writers, he really ought to retire from business for a year and write his reminiscences.

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IV.

BOOK dealers and dressmakers are very much alike. Both supply us with things most necessary in daily life, and with its useless luxuries. If you are rich you walk into an exclusive dressmaking establishment on Fifth Avenue. You tell the dressmaker: "I want to look slender, I like such and such a color, I want long skirts or short skirts." You ask for an evening gown or for a street dress or for an afternoon gown. And if you are rich and wish to buy books you'll go next door to the exclusive book shop, you will tell the salesman: "I want a novel or a biography, something serious or something humorous; I don't want it too free. The salesman will size you up and will bring forth the books which you will wish to take with you. At your next visit, dressmaker as well as bookdealer will have your "size" and your "number" and you will not have to repeat your special desires.

If you are only a well-to-do man or woman with a regular salary or income, you have your charge accounts in department stores and medium class shops, in book stores on Booksellers' Row, as Fourth Avenue between Eleventh and Fourteenth Street was so justly christened, or perhaps in one of the many book shops on Fifty-ninth Street. The merchants here will not pay so very much attention to your wishes and to your tastes, but try to impress you with the sanctity of the merciless goddess "Vogue." The salesman doesn't care that you detest ruffles and fringes. They are in season and therefore you ought to wear them or you are a back number and he treats you with contempt. The department store book salesman will tell you that Robert Chambers' last novel is "*The Best Seller*" and if you tell him that Chambers doesn't write to your taste, he will simply pity you, and tell you that "*Everybody*" is reading it, and that is final.

But if you are poor or your circumstances permit you to expend only a certain amount of money for your clothes and for your books and you despise the department store atmosphere with its alluring bar-

gains that persecute you ever after you were weak enough to buy them, like spooks of murdered souls, then adventures galore are in store for you, especially if you live in New York. Because one day surely you will run across "that marvelous dressmaker" who charges only a couple of dollars a day, follows your ideas, creates dreams of garments, and makes dressing a pleasure for you.

And in the strangest parts of the city, like a geranium pot on the sill of a tenement house, you encounter once in a while a real book store in New York. Is not the discovery an event in our unromantic lives? Looking over the dust-covered treasures is an exploration into strange lands, and usually a talk with the proprietor himself charms us like the fairy tale of long forgotten childhood.

Second Avenue, around First Street, is the promenade of that part of the Bowery which has not yet been turned into factories and sweat shops. Here are delicatessen stores, second-hand furniture dealers, grocery shops, ice cream parlors, drug stores, moving picture theatres, with crudely painted advertising boards depicting scenes from blood-and-thunder dramas. Then there is Kettel's Theatre, where they play Shakespeare in Yiddish. Thousands of men and women people the sidewalks and street. Roumanian, Hungarian, German and Polish with a Jewish accent are spoken here, and Yiddish, of course, the guttural sounds of which give the ear the same sensation as the eye receives from the window display of the foreign looking pickles, fancily prepared onions, and enormous strangely-shaped sausages of the stores. The women are without headgear, in underskirts, with blankets or shawls around their shoulders, their shoes unbuttoned; they have run out to buy something. Everybody on this street seems to buy or sell, talking loudly, bargaining with a passion inherited through generations. On the corner of Second Avenue and First Street is the Municipal Court, with its crowds of lawyers, of fighting, screaming and excited men and women on the doorsteps.

Mr. Kirschenbaum's Shop

Who in this beehive has time or desire to view the book stalls in front of Mr. Kirschenbaum's book store? Why did he select this extraordinary location for his shop? A tall, heavy-set, broad-shouldered Pole, with blonde whiskers, blue eyes, and an expression of kindness on his face that doesn't seem to correspond with the muscles of his arms of which no prize fighter need be ashamed. And if you walk into his shop you'll find almost any time between eight a. m. and midnight, men and women there like yourself, from all parts of the city, buying all sorts of books, as recently on a Saturday afternoon when a young girl asked for a copy of Thomas a Kempis and an old man for a copy of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales.

He has a little bit of everything in his shop, but you have to take the trouble of looking through it in order to discover the "gems" you are looking for. Here is Mr. Kirschenbaum's story in a few words:

"I served twelve years in a Polish regiment of the Austrian army as a non-commissioned officer. Later on I was an agent of officers and of the nobility in Galicia. There was nothing that I wouldn't buy of them or that I wouldn't sell to them. If they needed money I got it for them. One day I decided to emigrate to this country.

When I arrived here, I got a push cart, went through the streets of New York, bought up everything people had no use for, and then I sold it in the Bowery from my cart. They called me the "Siegel Cooper of the East Side." Soon I specialized in books. I didn't know books and their value and I sold them as I am selling them today, as merchandise. I buy them for a certain price and I sell them at a certain profit, and I don't care how much they are really worth. I haven't got time to look real values up. I'm too busy selling in quantities. One of my sons knows books. He opened a shop on Fourth Avenue, but I'm satisfied to turn over my stock as quickly as I can. I always had known big people in the old

country, and some of them I met here in influential positions. I had a hard time during my first years in America, and they offered me great positions in some branches of business that they knew I was an expert in, but the first demand they made was to shear off my beard: I knew what that meant. I looked too Jewish to them. My beard was never touched by a razor and never will be as long as I live, and my insisting upon the preservation of the exterior of an orthodox Jew made me impossible in any leading position of a business organization, so you see I had to start an independent business. That's how I happen to be here."

Mr. Kirschenbaum's shelves and tables contain something of everything in all languages about all subjects. To spend a couple of hours in his shop will prove that there is nothing new and original in this world that has not been written about by somebody years and years ago.

A Specialist in Excitement

If you think that the sensational paper novel, the mystery story in installments printed on newspaper, the dearly beloved Nick Carter stories, are things of the past because you don't see them in the regulation book stores where "intellectuals" meet, you are mistaken. They are as widely read as ever, and Mr. Joe W. Knoke specializes in these delights of certain old ladies, of boys and young girls. His little store on Third Avenue between Ninth and Tenth Streets is filled up with the most gruesome experiences in crime and adventure.

"I have been here for twelve years," he said recently, one could hardly hear his words, so great was the noise of the elevated thundering on its structure and the heavy delivery wagons rumbling over the old-fashioned cobblestones.

"I know my customers well. Some are reading detective stories exclusively; they don't want anything but detective stories. The younger generation prefers old magazines with short stories to paper novels.

I buy them by the pound from rag dealers, from the Salvation Army and everywhere I can get them. People pay as much as five cents for such back numbers. Once upon a time lots of Irish people used to live in this neighborhood and many Irish ladies still come to my shop to buy the works of Charles Garvice and of Bertha M. Clay. These are clean, good love stories. After they are through they bring them back and I allow them a few pennies on their next purchase, but in a few months they ask for the same books again, and some of my customers read every year the same books over and over.

"Then there are the shop girls from near-by department stores. They buy Street and Smith paper novels. The thicker the book the quicker they take it. They tell each other about the most exciting of these love stories, and they, too, read the same books constantly. Over there," and he pointed to a whole shelf full of mysterious looking pamphlets and books, "are my dream books, books on palmistry and on fortune telling. Old ladies buy them. There are just as many dream books as cook books, and each of these ladies sticks to the same brand for almost a life-time. Often they bring in old torn, finger-marked copies in which the printing can hardly be distinguished, and they wish to get another copy of the very same book. Perhaps it hasn't been printed for the last thirty or forty years, and you should see their disappointment if I tell them so, and how suspiciously they eye other dream books before they decide to buy one. Young girls also often are purchasers of dream books and books on palmistry. They use them for entertainment at parties and take them along on picnics. One old gentleman comes along every once in a while early in the morning, buys a magazine for a nickel and then spends a considerable length of time before my dream book shelf. I always wonder if he is looking up his last night's dream. Once I suggested to him to buy a copy, but he got indignant "because he didn't believe in such superstitious humbug."

The Man Who Knows His Books

A spotlessly clean little store on Thirty-eighth Street near Sixth Avenue, book shelves all around the walls, friendly pictures right beneath the ceiling. In the middle of the room a little desk, and in a chair before it Mr. Corbett, who prides himself on having read every book that he ever sold. Jack London used to spend hours here whenever he was in New York, and Edwin Markham received a good deal of inspiration from Mr. Corbett's suggestions. Literary hack writers are his daily visitors; to call them customers would be too optimistic. He dreams of magazine articles, he invents titles for them and he sells you for a few pennies all the material to write them if you happen to be a journalist on the lookout for suggestions.

He has his own peculiar ideas of what people should read and what they shouldn't read, and it is not an unusual occurrence that, for instance, a young girl should enter his shop and ask for a certain book, and he would answer: "Yes, I have it, but you shouldn't read it, and I won't sell it to you." And then he will tell her about some other book, and picture it in such desirable colors that she will change her mind and buy it instead.

"You know," he told me once, "the bookseller has a very important mission in life. The writer writes his books, but he doesn't know into whose hands they will fall, the publisher sells them as merchandise to dealers all over the country, but we little shop-keepers come in contact with the real readers. It's up to us to place something in their hands that might be decisive for their future career, that might inspire them to great and noble thoughts, and that might make criminals out of them. A few pennies that we might gain might mean the perdition of lives and souls.

The Farmer-Bookseller

Mr. D. L. Haberson is now on Saturdays only in his little book store that seems so lonesome and solitary on Twenty-third Street near Eighth Avenue in

the midst of cheap rooming houses and the noise of the subway excavations and constructions that are going on day and night. After years of toil he has arrived at the goal of his ambition. He has bought a farm on Long Island. One of those small farms on which one has to be an artist in order to make both ends meet. But he was in the book business for such a long time that almost nothing seems impossible to him, and he used to display many curious books in his shop. Especially out-of-the-way magazines, edited by out-of-the-way people, were his hobby. A small man, pale and slender, with the eyes of a philosopher, what strange desire must have taken possession of him to wish to till the soil? He installed an assistant in his shop, surely not a lucrative job, but this man told me: "I like it here. I can read all day and can save the money that I used to spend for books." That's the stuff most of those little book dealers are made of. They don't aspire to commercial success. If they make a living and can read, can read constantly, that's their reward in life.

A Night Bird

On Columbus Avenue, between Sixty-seventh and Sixty-eighth Streets, near Healey's Cabaret, a window is lighted no matter at what time in the night you may pass by. If you look into the narrow shop you will see a man sitting in a very small space, surrounded by heaps of books, smoking a long cigar, reading. His store remains closed in the day time and I don't imagine that the people who spend their nights in Mr. Healey's Cabaret buy books before they go home, or to some other place, but he doesn't seem to mind and is perfectly happy with his books, which grow all around him and make the space in which he can move freely smaller from day to day. He sits there all night and reads his books and is delighted to discover some long-forgotten writer, to point out his charms to you, and doesn't even ask you to buy.

And there is Mr. Lawson, somewhere far west on Forty-second Street, who travels about the country

picking up old books in farm houses, and Mr. Schwartz, who used to be a waiter, and who started a book shop near Astor Place. He wanted to cater to the discriminating readers of the spices of life, but Mr. Sumner interfered with his intentions and twice he made the unpleasant acquaintance of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. He had to pay a fine and do something more painful than that, and now if a prospective customer asks for one of the proscribed books, he shudders piously, brings out an old edition of Shakespeare and recommends the English bard as a suitable substitute for some French writer.

Jim Gillin, who had threatened for the past eight years to sell out his book shop on the corner of Twenty-eighth Street and Lexington Avenue, has done it finally, and moved out to his place somewhere in Jersey in order to breed rabbits, the study and the dream of his life. He had delved in books for so many years that nobody would have supposed he would ever change his profession.

Then there is old man Johnson, who prints catalogues every once in a while and sends them out broadcast from his basement store on Twenty-eighth Street near Broadway, and who is constantly and mysteriously busy at his desk, day and night, writing in a big folio. Perhaps he is writing the adventures and tribulations of a New York book dealer.

Mr. Stammer, Their Great Patron

Do you ask "How do all these people manage to earn a livelihood?" Mr. Stammer, the great book dealer from Fourth Avenue, whose specialty is hunting up every book that anybody in the United States might desire, no matter when and where printed, and who knows the most obscure book dealer in the most obscure part of New York, answered this question: "Because two-thirds of the book dealers in New York are selling exclusively almost to the remaining third. The big book dealers very rarely buy books from private sources. These little book shops are our vanguards, that collect the honey for us and we come

and take whatever we can use, or they bring it to us, and we are glad to have them come regularly." Mr. Stammer makes his round to these small book dealers almost constantly every day. He is their educator and patron. He tells them what books are worth money, and he pays a good price whenever he can use them. He is a welcome figure on rent day, and most of the treasures of these cobwebbed corners wander to the comfortable shelves of his palace on Fourth Avenue.

1918

Dealers in Literary Property

LETTERS of celebrated men and women, dead and alive, can today be purchased in the open market. The more private they are and the more they incorporate of the writer's soul, the higher the price.

There is no atmosphere of romance in these transactions. The autograph dealers sell because they wish to make money. The purchasers buy because they desire to possess something unique and because they know that the letters and autographs of celebrities are an excellent investment. Let us put aside untimely sentiment and assume that it is perfectly proper to sell at auction Shelley's love letters, or that a letter of Poe's grocer demanding in rude terms immediate payment of two dollars and fifty cents for food supplied, is a fitting library ornament if expensively framed together with the poet's portrait, and let us visit a few of the important dealers in such literary property in New York.

Mr. Benjamin's office is situated on the third floor of the Brunswick building facing Madison Square. This building occupies the site of the old Brunswick Hotel, once famous as New York's resting place for the literati who visited the United States.

The walls of this place of business are lined with enormous safes, a solitary typewriter clicks solemnly; the dignity of a broker's office prevails, such dignity as obtains where deeds are executed involving the transfer of millions.

Behind an enormous table Mr. Benjamin is seated. Nothing here reminds one of an antiquarian's cabinet or of a collector's museum. It is the working table of a bank president, whose chief motto is "efficiency."

"No, there is mighty little romance in this business," Mr. Benjamin began, and there seemed no reason to doubt his statement.

"I purchase autographs, manuscripts, signed portraits and all kinds of literary property in order to sell

again. There is an art in buying and a greater art in selling; it requires knowledge and a certain instinct or ability to associate events and people so that the value of the materials increases while in my possession.

"I deal exclusively in gilt-edged autographs of those men who have made history, literature and music. Our great statesmen are my specialty.

"No museum or library in the world has at present more authentic original material relating to our War of Independence and the Civil War than you can see in these safes of mine.

"Framed portraits with short letters by men of note are the side lines of book and art dealers. You cannot find them here.

"I am the only exclusive dealer in autographs in the United States. I have been thirty years at the game and I have made a quarter of a million dollars. Oh! Yes! I have about twice that amount invested in autographs."

"How does one become a dealer in literary property? How does one buy and sell?" were my next questions.

"I can tell you how I did it, but as for the others—I would refuse to guarantee results—unlike the detective correspondence schools.

"I did not want to be a dealer in autographs as a young man, but about forty odd years ago I had dreams that some day my own autographs would be valuable, or that at least I should be able to sell some of them to publishers and editors. My father, Park Benjamin, had been a literary man and a poet of note. He successfully edited big daily papers in New York. I graduated from Union College, served my apprenticeship on country magazines and was at the age of nineteen, editor of the Schenectady *Daily Union*.

"I made good and went to New York. I worked for eleven years as reporter for the Sun, several years directly under the great Dana.

"Interviews with big men were my specialty and some day I shall write my reminiscences, which will,

I think, make interesting reading. I inherited the poetical vein from my father. A book of my poems appears this month. In the book store of my brother, who sold once in a while an autograph of a celebrity, I met several collectors and studied their hobbies. I saw wide possibilities in the field if the business were handled scientifically, and I devoted myself to it exclusively.

"In September, 1887, I started a monthly paper, *The Collector*, and I have published it ever since. It reaches not only my customers and people to whom I might be able to sell, but librarians and historians as well, and it is largely quoted in biographies as I reprint unique letters and documents which otherwise would not be accessible to the public.

"So you see I am an editor and my paper is the oldest trade paper in the United States—if you can call it a trade to sell literary property.

"An autograph collector graduates from the ranks of book collectors.

"He usually begins by buying letters of his favorite authors to insert in their works, or to frame with their portraits. Bit by bit he becomes a regular collector. He finds that autograph letters take up little space compared with books, and that they are far less liable to injury by worms or decay. A well-selected collection of autographs will nearly always prove profitable at an auction sale. The sale draws in wealthy buyers whom the dealers never reach and their competition ensures high prices.

"Genuine autograph collecting has nothing to do with autograph fiends and their collecting of signatures. A large collection of signatures well arranged and illustrated with portraits and clippings, is a good thing—but albums of miscellaneous signatures with no system, and begged from annoyed celebrities, are little better than trash. When I buy such a collection I break it up at once. Notes responding to requests for autographs are no better than signatures. They are out of place in a good collection. A letter should contain some of the original thought of the

writer, and, if possible refer to incidents of his life or to his writings.

"My regular customers, people who buy constantly whenever I have something to offer them in their special line, are not the movie millionaires you can meet in the art shops and book shops on Fifth Avenue. They are usually retired business men, and physicians, well-to-do or of moderate means, university professors who have to save in order to be able to buy autographs. Every one of them has made a study of some literary or political celebrity, or is interested in some period of our own history. All documents or letters needed to complete their collections are welcome. But I also count among my patrons of long standing, poor men whose only property in this world are their collections of autographs, and they actually often suffer privations rather than part with their treasures.

"Some people are greatly interested in minor literary men of bygone days, whose autographs were never thought worth saving. I have a search department for such cases, and I am often curiously successful.

"You would be surprised to find how almost anything you may want can be found if you do not tire in looking for it and if you know how and where to advertise.

"I advertise everywhere, and constantly. The smallest country paper sometimes means more to my business than the big city paper.

"I have bought many trunks of valuable documents and letters in the garrets of old homesteads in towns whose names you have never heard of—called there by some heir, who read my advertisement in the paper and who preferred to sell the literary remains of his grandfather to me rather than to the ragman!

"And here is the secret of success in this business: constant and wise advertising.

"Of course the autographs of our best writers are in constant demand. They have a market price, a price, however, which fluctuates almost from day to day.

"For instance, if a man dies, his value goes up instantly, if his fame has not been an overnight popu-

larity. On the other hand, the signature of the favorite actress will lose all value at her death and will be forgotten by the public as well as by the autograph dealer.

On the very day that James Whitcomb Riley was prostrated by a paralytic stroke and it became known that he would never be able to use his right hand again, the prices of his manuscripts and letters almost doubled.

"Living English authors, like Kipling or Wells or Chesterton, fetch higher prices here than in England. Kipling especially brings almost five times as much here as he does in his own country.

"Of course we buy at auctions. The Anderson Galleries are noted in New York for their sales and so is the American Art Association. Both appeal to the collector rather than to the dealer and prices are often prohibitive.

"Values are being created there and it very often happens that some collector pays five hundred dollars for something that he refused to pay fifty for to the dealer.

"One of the hobbies of American collectors is a page with the unbroken lines of all the signatories to the Declaration of Independence. Another favorite object is the signatures of the presidents of the United States. I pay a good deal of attention to the latter, having collected them myself. Do you want to hear my opinion of the handwritings of our various presidents and some natural conclusions reached as to their character?

"Most of them wrote a good clear hand. At seventeen years of age Washington wrote a clear, round hand, upright with a tendency to ornamentation of the capital letters. In 1760 he wrote a smooth, running hand, and during the war of the Revolution this changed to the large beautiful round hand, the finest specimen of writing of which I have any knowledge. This persisted to his death.

"John Adams wrote an up-and-down, round hand, rather small, early in life, and gradually growing

larger until the individual letters were bigger than those made by any other president. At the end, when his sight failed, his writing became an irregular scrawl—on and off the line.

“Thomas Jefferson started with a fluent running hand, and this characteristic his signature retained throughout his life. Shortly before the Revolution his hand changed to a round, upright form and so continued.

“James Monroe wrote a very running hand, crowding his letters together and often going off the line. He fancied a heavy writing pen.

“John Quincy Adams wrote a plain, perpendicular hand with no ornamentation, almost a backhand. In late years it showed much trembling in the letters, but remained clear.

“James Buchanan wrote a round, running hand, sometimes large and sometimes small, with each letter well formed. His writing continued the same all his life.

“Abraham Lincoln wrote at first a plain running hand with letters well made and words well spaced. As years passed it became more upright until at the end it was straight up and down.

“Ulysses S. Grant wrote an unformed school-boy hand when he left West Point. This improved and became firm, but was never a good hand. Of late years it was a running hand, with letters incomplete and other marks of haste. On the whole, one of the poorest hands of the lot.

“James A. Garfield wrote a handsome running hand when a general in the army. The letters were well formed and the words well separated. Altogether a fine, clerkly hand. Later it became irregular and tended towards the upright, and lost its beauty.

“Grover Cleveland began with a large, angular, running hand, and gradually changed to a small, lady-like hand of great regularity. At first it was like Madison's.

“William McKinley wrote a fine plain running hand,

with letters well formed and a tendency not to lift the pen between words.

"Theodore Roosevelt has written the worst hand of any of the Presidents. The letters are badly formed, the lines in poor alignment and altogether they have a very scratchy appearance. They bear marks of haste, of a mind outrunning the pen.

"William H. Taft has a fine, handsome, regular, large running hand. Altogether a handsome letter.

"Woodrow Wilson writes a very handsome hand, with letters well made, freely running in straight lines—altogether of the copperplate order. His letters seem to be written with deliberation and care.

"Washington and Polk wrote the handsomest letters, and Roosevelt and Grant the scratchiest."

Mr. Benjamin is the great pioneer in his chosen field, the prince of the autograph-dealers. The money he makes in autographs he invests in real estate. He owns a magnificent summer home, and all because he knows how to buy and how to sell letters of dead and living celebrities.

The Market Price of Some Autographs

S. L. Clemens.....	\$11.50
Thos. De Quincey.....	18.00
George Eliot.....	23.00
Eugene Field.....	31.00
Alex. Hamilton.....	50.00
John Paul Jones.....	280.00
Rudyard Kipling.....	24.00
R. L. Stevenson.....	100.00
Alfred Tennyson.....	28.00
Wm. Wordsworth.....	21.00
Ben. Franklin.....	132.50
Geo. Washington.....	227.50
John Adams.....	57.50
Thos. Jefferson.....	37.50
W. H. Harrison.....	24.00
Zachary Taylor.....	90.00
Andrew Johnson.....	120.00
Wm. McKinley.....	67.50

Theo. Roosevelt.....	12.00
W. H. Taft.....	55.00
A. Lincoln.....	210.00

Mr. Madigan's Interesting Shop

A complete change of scene. The most fashionable shopping district of New York, just around the corner of Fifth Avenue in Forty-fifth Street.

A window filled with expensively framed autographs marks the sanctum of Mr. Francis P. Madigan. He is a jovial man who has all the qualities which make for the success of our Fifth Avenue art shops. He knows when to stop talking, he knows when to say "the word" which closes the deal: he sells to his customers, they do not buy from him. The high walls are hung with innumerable autographs in appropriate frames, signed portraits of great celebrities; some little drawings and sketches by lesser known artists—Mr. Madigan also dabbles in art. His specialty is selling books signed by their authors. He is one of the few men who realized Oscar Wilde's importance at a time when no one paid much attention to this unfortunate poet. In the course of years he collected a mass of Oscar Wilde material, and he is now reaping the harvest.

I spent an afternoon in his shop. Quite a study for the observer of human souls was the procession of visitors who came and went continuously. They pay for autographs of men who never could even sell their work during their lives. Mr. Madigan has sold more Poe material during the last ten years than anybody else.

Poor Poe! During his entire literary career he hardly got in direct returns as much money as this dealer in dead men's letters receives for one single epistle.

The Poet's Income

A letter of Poe, dated New York, January 18, 1849, also in the possession of Mr. Madigan, allows us to look behind the scenes of a literary workshop of the

early fifties. It is addressed to John R. Thompson, the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, one of the most powerful literary magazines of the time. Poe offers his services as a critic at the rate of two dollars a page, provided Mr. Thompson obliges himself to take not less than five pages each month. The irony of fate was never better exemplified. The manuscript which he offered at two dollars a page is now worth four hundred and fifty dollars. The very letter in which he offers to sell it at that sum was purchased a short time ago for five hundred dollars.

“New York, Jan. 13, '49.

“My Dear Sir:

“Accept my thanks for the two *Messengers* containing Miss Talley's ‘Genius.’ I am glad to see that Griswold, although imperfectly, has done her justice in his late ‘Female Poets of America.’

“Enclosed I send you the opening chapter of an article called ‘Marginalia,’ published about three years ago in *The Democratic Review*. . . . My object in writing you now is to propose that I continue the papers in the *Messenger*, running them through the year at the rate of five pages each month, commencing with the March number. You might afford me, as before, I presume, \$2 a page. . . . If you think well of my proposal, I will send you the two first numbers (10 pp.) immediately on receipt of a letter from you. You can pay me at your convenience, as the papers are published or otherwise. . . .

“Very truly yours,

“EDGAR ALLAN POE.”

“Jno. R. Thompson, Esq.

“P. S.—I am about to bestir myself in the world of letters rather more busily than I have done for three or four years past, and a connection which I have established with two weekly papers may enable me, now and then, to serve you in respect to *The Messenger*.

Our interview was interrupted by a handsome youth with a fashionable fur coat and who used very broken English.

He desired to buy autographs of French "big people," and of composers and of musicians of all nations. Mr. Madigan brought out his royalty portfolios. Louis XIV. and Marie Antoinette were the star pieces. The youth did not hesitate long. He bought them and took about two dozen letters of musical people. He ordered them all framed and sent up to his studio. He offered English bank notes in payment of the bill (some four hundred odd dollars), but Mr. Madigan insisted on receiving United States currency, and so the man went to a nearby bank, returned shortly, and paid.

"What does he want with them?" I asked, astonished.

The whole transaction had lasted less than fifteen minutes.

"He is a musician," replied Mr. Madigan, "who will play the social game. He will invite some very rich people to his studio, the walls will be hung with the autographs he has just bought, and he'll tell them about his 'dear' relics of his ancestors and will also point familiarly to his 'dear' friends the musicians and composers.

"If he succeeds in his game, he will keep the autographs, but most likely he will come back to me in six months or sooner, financially embarrassed, and will beg of me to buy them back."

A well-known poet came in. Mr. Madigan took him to the back of the store. The poet wrote for a little while and then handed the sheet of paper to Madigan. A short conversation in subdued tones, and the poet left the shop. Madigan told me that the poet had written an extemporaneous ode on Oscar Wilde. "He often comes in," Mr. Madigan continued, "for a chat and presents me quite frequently with a few lines of his poetry. Once he had not left the shop more than half an hour. I sold the poem he had just written to another friend of mine for ten dollars."

An old lady entered. She unwrapped a parcel that she had carried under her arm. A lot of letters and photographs. I felt that she resented my presence

during the coming transaction. I turned my back. I listened to a long lecture by Mr. Madigan about the cheapness and undesirability of the autographs which she offered to him for sale. Finally he offered a few dollars and the old lady, reluctantly, pocketed the money and left her parcel.

A young woman entered next—an interior decorator doing Mrs. Van X's breakfast room. It had come into her head that Cardinal Richelieu's picture and signature in that charming Louis Quatorze frame would be ideal between the lavender window hangings. She asked the price and had it sent.

A newspaper man was the next visitor. He wanted a picture of Stephen Crane, the poet, to illustrate a Sunday story. Mr. Madigan fished out a portrait from many others, card indexed and filed away in a specially constructed cabinet.

And so it goes on continuously, the whole day, buying and selling.

Schulte's Book Store

Scattered about the throbbing city are a few quiet nooks and corners that seem especially made for the lover of antiques. They are not numerous, but full of a certain charm. Book stores, with big boxes in front of the doors, where you can choose for your pennies, tomes in old-fashioned binding and printing. Inside are shelves laden with books in delightful disorder left by the book-hunter who looked through them before you. The narrow passageway becomes narrower on each visit you pay to the shop because of newly-arrived books and pamphlets.

A long vista of boxes and cases well filled with a delightful miscellany of books marks the front of Mr. Schulte's book store on the southwest corner of 23rd Street and Lexington Avenue. Don't cast suspicious looks at the nice girls in immaculate white blouses who loiter about the aisles. They won't interfere with you. They won't ask you any questions. You will soon feel at home after you have glanced at the titles of the books on any shelf, and if you meet

Mr. Schulte he won't be a stranger to you. There is such a deep-founded relationship between the man and his books and customers. He is the appreciative, sympathetic co-collector and, after you have gained his confidence, if the friendship is mutual, he will spread out his gems before you: a first edition with a rare imprint, or some unknown etching by Whistler or Haden or Zorn.

George D. Smith, Speculator in Literary Property

A new type of bookseller has developed since books and literary property have become commercial and subject to corners created by shrewd buyers and holders, and to fluctuations caused by selling *en masse*. Mr. George D. Smith, the king of rare books and great dealer in literary property, operates on the largest scale.

Mr. Smith buys carloads of books for millions of dollars and sells again by the carload to millionaires who build palaces in California and who order their libraries complete. Mr. Smith is the leading figure in our auction houses where he buys, excluding all competition, by paying an exorbitant price for anything he desires to possess. He is a millionaire and the chief counsellor of our *nouveaux riches* when they furnish their homes with rare autographs and valuable books.

Mr. Cadigan of Brentano's

After you have passed the stairway in Brentano's leading to the basement and properly admired the framed autographs and signed portraits which cover the walls, you will pass the gate that leads into the kingdom of Mr. Cadigan, another dealer in literary property but of quite a different type. Mr. Cadigan is the head of Brentano's periodical department. He knows the development of the American magazine better than anybody else living. For a score of years he has watched successes and failures, but nearest to his heart are the magazines of those men who have

had the courage to stand up for their own ideas and their own conception of the world.

Some of the most pathetic figures in American letters have founded magazines of their own; they would not follow the example of their contemporaries or submit to the wishes of their publishers and to the presumed desires of the reading public. Mr. Cadigan knows them all. He recommends them if he thinks them commendable. While the gigantic trusts of our American news companies afford them very little or no chances for circulation, Mr. Cadigan adopts them and presents them for sale on his tables next to the full-fledged products of the capitalistic press.

I get more satisfaction and pleasure out of Brentano's basement devoted to periodicals than out of all the periodical reading rooms of all our public libraries combined, with the Carnegie institutions thrown in. To be able to look over the current issues of magazines and to take home just the interesting ones carries with it an intimate satisfaction.

1917

Young Madigan

EVERYBODY calls him young Madigan to distinguish him from his father, "old" Madigan, the dean of the autograph craft in the United States. Tom Madigan is young in years; about twenty-five; but he was bred among autographs. There is a lot of romance and excitement in finding autographs. It stirred the imagination of the boy. While his schoolmates indulged in Indian stories and enthused themselves with the mysteries of Sherlock Holmes, Tom Madigan went about searching for autographs. Old country houses, dilapidated and deserted mansions, garrets even were his hunting grounds. He had a wonderful scent. He found old trunks with letters and manuscripts, boxes with documents and deeds, and his father taught him to separate the chaff from the wheat.

Tom read a good deal. History and biography mostly. He became his father's walking encyclopedia. There is a good deal of the born reporter in Tom, and at a tender age, he discovered his literary inclinations. His autographs furnished his material, dead letters became alive in his hands, magazines and journals were glad to print his rambles and discoveries. We thank him for a good many sidelights upon the private life of illustrious personages. One day Tom disappeared. The fact is he got married and started a shop of his own. Knowledge was his only capital, and today at the age of twenty-five he ranks among the first autograph dealers in America.

"Yes, we have to get high prices for autographs," Madigan said, smilingly, while opening his enormous safe to show me some specimens. "I believe this is in some respects the finest tribute the present generation pays to genius and greatness. These prices are suggestive of reflection, however, in view of the now almost universal practice of typewriting letters and manuscripts.

"The written word, as it flows from the pen, has

much of the inspiration, the mental process and the ideals of the writer; the typewritten word tells nothing.

"President McKinley, to give one instance, was an early user of the typewriter, and therefore, manuscript letters by his hand are exceedingly scarce, scarcer and more expensive than long letters by President Adams, Jefferson, Madison or Jackson. And I dare say that these will be far easier to procure in coming years than like specimens by Roosevelt, Taft or Wilson.

"Here, look at this letter written by John Adams. Isn't it a delicious bit of intimate history that unrolls itself before our eyes? Adams, de jure leader of the Federalist party while Alexander Hamilton has the actual power, is peeved about 'too much intrigue in this business both in General Washington and me.' *'If I shall ultimately be the dupe of it, I am much mistaken in myself.'* And now read this memorable line: *'If I could resign him the office of President, I would do it immediately and with the highest pleasure; but I never said I would hold the office and be responsible for its exercise while he should execute it.'*

"Look at this letter by Henry Clay, *'Although I am not a member of any Christian Church, I have a profound sense of the inappreciable value of our religion, which has increased and strengthened as I have advanced in years.'*

Read this note of Robert Fulton's, the celebrated inventor, to his lawyer referring to a Mr. Church, his partner, in an 'enterprise of small canals.' *'By becoming a partner he took a chance of profit or loss, but was bound to pay me the purchase money. He failed in his second payment. I consequently stayed in Europe, not regarding a man who had no regard for his engagements.'*

"Look at this distinguished handwriting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Can you read between the lines?

"I lent you by mistake a copy of my book, which contains corrections which I, therefore, need in preparing the next edition."

"Can you imagine the poet hunting for his corrected book, the printer waiting until he discovers that some friend has carried it away? And here is a *sauve* note of John S. Sargent, the American portrait painter, asking some society woman in words of utmost politeness to come to his studio for a sitting. One almost can see the \$5,000 check paid for the painting.

"Here read the fuming indignation of an American poet. A letter by Bayard Taylor, whose London publishers had refused to publish his 'Masque of the Gods.' He writes about English prudery to James R. Osgood, his American publisher. *'I return the two London letters. What prigs the publishers there must be. It is very evident they are afraid, though why I can't see for the life of me. If there is reason for it, then you are the boldest of the bold. . . . If you see any unusually spicy or stupid attacks, I should be greatly obliged if you would send them.'*

"Lucy Larcon is an American poetess, who is not very well known, but I think this little poem, evidently never published before, is not bad:

"I said it in the meadow-path;
I say it on the mountain stairs;
The best things any mortal hath
Are those that every mortal shares."

The Romance of a Chicago Book Dealer

WELLS Street, between the river and East Chicago Avenue, is the Bowery of Chicago. Once a residential section, now the old mansions and frame cottages, hastily erected after the fire, are dilapidated and are used as lodging houses and factories of the inferior sort. Here and there a modern structure, a storage house or an industrial plant. Dan Martin's Mission is here, several rescue halls, a Salvation Army citadel, the famous coffee wagons on the corners of side streets, where unfortunates are given a cup of coffee, a loaf of bread and advice that should lead to salvation. The Moody church is the aristocrat of the quarter. Drunken men and women line the sidewalks day and night; gruesome phonographs are continually heard in rum shops. Policemen patrol in pairs, and this beat is considered the most dangerous in the whole city.

In the midst of one of the worst blocks is a large show window. A pawnbroker would be most appropriate in these surroundings. But it is not a pawnbroker's display; there are paintings and, if you choose to step nearer to examine them, you will scarcely believe your own eyes: a couple of portraits by Benjamin West, signed; a magnificent etching by Whistler, with the familiar butterfly in the left hand corner; high up near the ceiling, between mischievous gargoyles, a large canvas which one recognizes as a magnificent work of an Italian master. A few Duerers are pinned to the wall, rows of old books, not dusted for a long while, are on shelves in the center.

"If these things are genuine," I thought, "they are priceless treasures; of course they cannot be." I entered the shop. There was just enough space to open the door, to squeeze in: piles of books from the floor to the very high ceiling, drawings, paintings, carvings, leaned against the dusty backgrounds of old tomes. It was the most extraordinary place I had

ever entered. There seemed to be some order in this most astonishing disorder. A little bell sounded somewhere in the faraway background. It was a very long room. I heard approaching footsteps, very energetic footsteps. I was astonished that a person could worm his way through an almost invisible passage between the heaped-up stacks of volumes—an old gentleman with hair hanging to his shoulders, a long beard, wonderful eyes which seemed to sparkle in the dim light of the strange place. I liked him at once; his quiet melodious voice, his dreaming faraway look and the decision of his manner. I told him frankly that the strangeness of the place, in such strange surroundings, had attracted me. I came again and again. And I treasure the hours I spent in Mr. Doerner's "book-shop" as among the most pleasant of my life. I never grew tired of standing up there. There was no space for a chair, and I doubt if there was a chair in the place.

I think it a sacrilege to call Julius Doerner a book seller or antique dealer. He is a collector and an antiquarian. He knows his books, and has more than half a million of them. He treasures his works of art, delights in showing them to you, but selling? that is another question. There is not a phase of American history he could not lecture on with more thoroughness than any American University professor. His collection of pamphlets, of the earliest newspapers and periodicals, his gift of finding important contemporary notices relating to American history, in foreign journals, books and chronicles, is remarkable. I thought him an eccentric gentleman of means, who after extensive travel round the world, had decided to lead the life of a hermit among his treasures. He had, in fact, traveled very little; collecting had been his passion from earliest youth; he had denied himself for almost three decades the comforts and good things of this world; and he had found a very efficient way of beating our high cost of living.

"It is not the high cost of living," he used to say, "it is the cost of high living that troubles the world.

For years I have expended seven cents a day for my living expenses, and you can see, yourself, that I am strong and healthy."

He is an excellent musician. Beneath thousands of pounds of books an old-fashioned piano is buried in his shop. He called the pile of material, that had to be removed before he could open the instrument, his time clock. Every once in a while he would forget his work (which consisted mostly of reading and compiling) and would devote himself with all the fervor of an enthusiast to Beethoven, Bach or Mozart.

Very few customers come to his place of business. If some curiosity seeker, like myself, attempts to break into his sanctum, they find in him a courteous but not inviting or solicitous shop keeper. "What do you want?" is his curt question. If a book is asked for, he will fish it out from among his five hundred thousand books with an almost miraculous quickness, name the price, and then it is up to the customer to say "Yes" or "No," and the interview is ended. His treasures are all "finds." He discovered them in junk shops, in garrets of old mansions, in unpromising trunks of storage houses. There is, for instance, a most magnificent soft-shell cameo, a biblical scene, marvelous workmanship of some exquisite artist of the early Italian renaissance. He bought it from a pawnbroker for five dollars. He refused a staggering sum from Tiffany's and resisted the very tempting price which Mrs. Potter-Palmer was willing to pay for it, not because he did not need the money or was holding out for a larger profit (the sum offered him was two thousand dollars, I believe), but because he preferred to have the cameo himself.

Quite a Romance

Someone who has known Mr. Doerner since his first arrival in Chicago told me his story. He was a civil engineer, and lost his wife and child in the same year. Grief and disappointment turned him against his profession. He inherited at this time something like twenty acres of land in Chicago, which were in

those days outside the city limits, but are now the most valuable property in the city. He was waiting for a final settlement of the estate, and used his idle hours looking about the book-shops in Chicago. Soon he was well known and well liked by all the book dealers. He purchased books and his knowledge of books was astonishing. About twenty years ago Chicago was a great center for book auctions. Ship loads of books from England were sold here, and Mr. Doerner soon became a frequenter of the auction rooms. Early printed books were his hobby. Once he could not resist and put in his bid of several hundred dollars for a rare collection. The books went to him. He could not pay, but gave as security a mortgage on his legacy. In subsequent auctions he bought large lots, increasing the mortgage upon his real estate. Then came the day when the auctioneers demanded payment. They foreclosed the mortgage, bought Mr. Doerner's property at auction for a ridiculously small amount of money, at once quit the book auction business, parceled out Mr. Doerner's twenty acres of land into building lots, and became—millionaires.

Mr. Doerner bore his misfortune with equanimity. He continued his regular trips to the book dealers and one day a proposition was put before him. A book-seller on Wells Street, one of the oldest in the city, died suddenly, and his stock of books had to be catalogued in order to be sold at public auction for the benefit of his estate:

"Would Mr. Doerner undertake to catalogue the stock and appraise it; the estate would pay him three dollars per day for his services?" Mr. Doerner accepted, and, to make the story short, at the end of six months, the cataloguing and appraising were not yet finished, the book-seller's heirs were unwilling to pay Mr. Doerner's fees, which amounted to several hundred dollars, upon the dubious chance of reimbursement by public auction:

"Would Mr. Doerner accept the books, themselves, in payment of his claim?" He would.

And so he found himself the proprietor of a book shop.

Mr. Doerner has made discoveries during his career which were of the utmost importance to American history. His collection of paintings, especially of American paintings, would fill a private museum. He hates commercialism, he loves weak humanity, and, strange to say, the disreputable men and women of Wells Street love him, and he and his possessions are safe in the most dangerous part of the city.

Or is it true, as he once answered in a rather pessimistic mood: "If they suspected that I had only one thirty-second carat of a diamond in my place, they would murder me and loot my shop in order to find it. But books or paintings, who cares for them in America?"

Frank Morris and His Famous Shop

Chicago had a great literary period in the nineties. Eugene Field had come to the Western metropolis and was in the early stage of his fame. Stanley Waterloo had written his books, the White Chapel Club was in its flower, Oppie Reed and Bill Nye carried the strangest legends of Chicago throughout the United States on their more or less romantic "lecture" tours. Ben King's funeral had created a sensation all over the United States. The World Fair brought a great influx of English poets and writers to Chicago. Cowly Stapleton Brown had started his unforgettable *Goose Quill* in which he predicted twenty-four years ago that Kipling had sung his swan song in "Plain Tales of the Hills," that Hall Caine would sink into oblivion after a few seasons of best-seller notoriety. He paid in the *Goose Quill* homage to the genius of Oscar Wilde, and to the man who wrote the Elder Conklin stories. Kimball and Stone established their *Chap Books* in which America was given a chance to get acquainted with Ernest Dowson, Aubrey Beardsly, John Davidson, Stephane Mallarme, Verlaine, Joseph Peledan, Villiers de L'Isle Adam,

Baudelaire here found their first translations, and until today the *Chicago Chap Book* remains the only source of information of the lives and times of the French decadents. Bill Eaton then was the great dramatic critic who had had his season in London and had come back as the only American who in one year had acquired a perfect English accent. Col. Bill Vischer, the famous Confederate editor and singer of the Southern States had completed his eleven hundred and fifty-sixth patriotic song and had issued his sentimental "In the Canoe."

And all this time Frank Morris' little book shop on West Madison Street was the center of the very select among artists and literati. Frank Morris was the friend of all of them. In his shop they used to assemble and talk of future glories and the fame of the past. Everybody loved Frank, and many were homeless after his shop had fallen victim to the flames. But soon he was established again, on Adams Street. Those of his old friends who were left followed him there, and now, after times of storm, he is settled in new quarters in the Marshall Field Building. There is no more genial man to talk to than Frank. He is not only a seller of books, but is a part of the most important period of American literature, of our famous nineties. Many poets have written poems to Frank Morris. Here are two by Eugene Field.

TO FRANK MORRIS:

Believe me by all those endearing old charms
With which your quaint shop is provided,
I shall honor the trade by whose help I have made
A collection of freaks that's derided.
And if you believe me—when then I've to ask
That, till fortune betimes readjusts me
With dollars and dimes for my yarns and my rhymes,
You still shall continue to trust me.

EUGENE FIELD.

October, 1889.

LINES WRITTEN UNDER PORTRAIT OF F. M. M.:

This is the robber, as sure as you're born,
Against whose guile I fain would warn
The bibliomaniac, tattered and torn,
Who pauses to look at some second-hand book
That lies on the shelf all covered with dust
And is marked "four dollars for cash—no trust"
In a gloomy corner that smells of must
Down in the shop that Morris built!

EUGENE FIELD.

1888.

Powner's Book Shop

No, there is no accident, no riot on the corner of Clark Street, opposite the City Hall. The scrambling mass of people are simply book lovers and book collectors, and Powner's has got in a new consignment of books. Such scenes occur every Saturday. The big stalls in front of the shop are filled with all sorts of books, old Roman antiquities, books on sports, old poetry, collected by someone who had disposed of his books, or who had left his treasures behind him. Mr. Powner used to be a school teacher in Greensburg, Indiana, and he started his book business about twelve years ago with the thoroughness of a school master. Rare and valuable books are his own special department, and he leaves modern books entirely to his clerks.

His shop today is the center for the Chicago collectors. The human interest he takes in his customers is that of a real antiquarian. Everybody is at home in his shop. He doesn't begrudge anyone finding a gem on his "quarter counter." Last week, for instance, some lucky chap found a first edition of Rousseau's "Emile" with Rousseau's autograph presentation inscription to the King and the royal coat of arms on the binding, and bought the book for seventy-five cents. "Such things may happen," was Mr. Powner's remark when he heard of the transaction. "I am glad he got it."

Saturday is the great book day. In the back room upon empty book boxes men of all walks of life sit

around, prosperous business men, millionaires, who are just enjoying living, students, newspaper men from the nearby newspaper offices, but they all are linked by a common love. They are all ardent book collectors.

There are a good many other book shops in Chicago. There is Hill's, who caters to the extravagant wishes of Western millionaires. Then there is McClurge's, the Model Book Store, conducted like a modern department store.

But then there is the unique product of the Chicago book market, the peripatetic book-seller. Half collector, half merchant, these men are constantly nosing about shops, picking up books in Powner's, for instance, for twenty-five cents and selling them at once for two dollars and a half to Mr. Hill, who they know has an inquiry for that particular copy. They love the uncertainty of their daily bread. Setting out in the morning upon their rounds, they look forward to their finds of the day. In a junk shop they, perhaps, will run across one of those scarce items which are found once in a lifetime, and again they may find nothing but worry about the needs of the day.

Chicago Revisited

In Memoriam Julius Doerner

JULIUS DOERNER is dead. He had been a book dealer after his own heart. Living among his books was his delight. He bought constantly, sold little and read much: a man who valued his books by their contents. He was as simple as a girl of sixteen, a bad girl of sixteen.

He wore an alpaca coat and panama hat winter and summer, in snow and shine. Both were bought ten years ago at a Salvation Army store. Cats were Julius Doerner's only companions; stray cats picked up on dark nights in alleys and doorways. They were named after the days of the week on which he found them. He never had more than fourteen. "Friday Afternoon" was a black tom-cat with six toes on each paw. It could talk. Doerner said so and he was very truthful. He hated women who were unwomanly, thought policemen incompetent, and lived on seven cents a day.

He loved his mother, who sent him a fried chicken every Christmas, half a turkey on each Thanksgiving day, and who brought him into this world fifty-seven years ago.

He loved her so much that he wanted to give her a gift which no money in the world could purchase—exclusive, unique. So, he bought an old Washington hand press, rusty and prehistoric type, and wrote a book for her; he set it up letter by letter, word by word, line by line, page by page; distributing the type after he had made only one impression. It took him three years to complete his book. It took him another year to illuminate it with rare wood cuts by Durer and Kranach, with miniatures taken from old handwritten cloister books. He bound it with his own hands, and tooled the leather of its covers with exquisite golden arabesques.

His old mother in Pennsylvania could not read a

word of English, though born and brought up in America. She used Pennsylvania Dutch exclusively.

Julius Doerner never slept in a bed but was accustomed to sit up all night in a Morris chair in the back of his shop. His most exquisite pleasure, and only recreation was to play Bach, Mozart and Beethoven on an old spinet.

He wore the same celluloid collar for twelve years, and washed it every Monday morning with sapolio. The same cake and collar were purchased from a starving peddler on a very cold night, as an alternative to giving the peddler two bits for a night's lodging.

Goethe and Franz Lieber were his favorites; Whitman, Poe and Wilde, his vaudeville stage.

He cooked vegetable soup in a big tin kettle each Tuesday, and drank it cold for the rest of the week, until the kettle was empty.

He knew what was great and beautiful in art, letters and life. To him Jesus was the greatest of men, and Rockefeller the meanest. Money was as unreal as people who buy books according to auction catalogues and bindings.

He died in his Morris chair with a book on his knees. There he was found, rigid and cold, several days afterwards by the grocer, who came to dun him for last month's bill, which amounted to one dollar and eighty-five cents.

Julius Doerner had a big heart, a fine mind, was a Spartan by nature, German in sentimentality, a Yankee in shrewdness, a lover of truth, an enemy of hypocrisy and idleness; a friend of outcasts.

He knew books and men, and therefore could not make a success in selling books to men.

Chicagoans who met him on the street saw his long hair, his alpaca coat and his straw hat, and called him a freak; others who had met him thought him a queer one; the chosen few to whom he gave his friendship, loved him.

He was five feet, eight inches tall, wore locks and a beard that hadn't been touched by shears for

twenty-five years, didn't give a damn for conventions and appearances, lived his own life, subservient to no one, lording over no one.

The world thought him poor. He was rich.
Requiescat in pace!

Kroch's International Book Store on Michigan Boulevard is to the West what Brentano's is to the East. Shopkeepers have become teachers and publicity agents. Their clients don't know what they wish to purchase. They are too tired or too ignorant to read literary reviews. They let Mr. Kroch tell them what to read.

Mr. Kroch is an interesting little man. He wears a toupee and a broad kindly smile. He has the demeanor of a man who has risen from the ranks and is proud of it. He has kept pace with his success. Money has not turned his head. He knows that he owes gratitude to the authors whom he sells. The quainter his find, the more exclusive seems his taste, the more he pleases his clients, the greater will be his cash receipts. And so he has an open eye for authors who are not popular.

What greater boast for a book salesman in Chicago than to have disposed of more than two hundred copies of Oscar Wilde's *Life and Confessions* by Frank Harris? To have induced more than one hundred people to buy each month *Pearson's Magazine*? And his clients are the very rich; he doesn't tire showing them the other side of life.

Frank Morris is still on deck, issuing catalogues, selling rare books, delighting his many friends and clients with the charm of his personality. The man with a literary past is a most amiable companion, presuming that his heart is filled with love, and that his compassion overlooks the faults of men. Frank Morris played an important part, if not a central one, in that lurid period of the early nineties, when Chicago was the literary Mecca of America.

Powner's Book Store is the gathering place of book hunters and collectors.

"Gems can be found here," seems the unwritten motto that attracts antiquarians, as a lighted candle attract moths. Young Mr. Powner is in the Service, somewhere-in-France. Mr. Powner, Sr., had to leave once more his ranch in Arizona, and assume the responsibilities of a Chicago shopkeeper.

And then there is Janski, the old assistant of Frank Morris in his late Adams Street shop, established in a store of his own, selling books as ever, happy and contented to contribute his part toward the elevation of Chicago's literary taste.

On Van Buren Street, near the Boulevard, is also a new and important book store. Mr. Chandler, for more than thirty years of McClurge's Publishing house, has set up up his establishment there. Very few books are in his place, but each is a jewel. He is a sort of a George D. Smith of Chicago, but minus gambling inclinations. Books for him are not objects for speculation, but gilt-edged values.

And, of course, I paid a visit to my friend, George Engelke. He is a great occultist, who has not eaten meat for thirty years. He believes in the powers of Hanish of lamented memory and is a sincere follower of his cult. Engelke is like Alfred Stieglitz of 291 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. His soul seems to walk three steps ahead of his body, or three steps behind his body. His life is an eternally undecided race, between soul and body.

The Radical Book Shop is right around the corner. It is a co-operative store with a large stock of ultra-radical pamphlets and magazines, the meeting place for all sorts of Bolsheviki, pleasant Bolsheviki, who want to intoxicate themselves with words rather than with deeds, who are more eager to have a good time under present conditions than to be martyrs for a new and better world. And when they want to amuse themselves, and be real radicals, they go around the block, to the Dillpickle. Mr. Johns, who is one of the co-operatives of the bookshop, is also one of the proprietors of the Dillpickle, a sort of restaurant, public forum, dance hall, and at present "the slum of Chi-

cago," because some of its hangers-on were arrested as supposed bomb manufacturers during the recent I. W. W. trial.

It is a sort of debating club, *a la* Greenwich Village, with automobiles in front of it after ten p. m. when the rich come to see the poor, the law-abiding want to have a peek at the lawless, the properly married to see the free-lovers. . . . Chicago is very young, you know! It is in its bootees. All these "new ideas" are here in flower of springtime.

I once said, "Were there no Greenwich Village, one would have to be invented." Chicaga invented its own. The Dillpickle will have many competitors soon, under the signs of flowers, vegetables and animals. In a couple of years they will become stale canned goods. And then the empty cans will be consigned to the ash can. Greenwich Village all over again!

1919

In Boston

BOOK stores are the intellectual barometers of our cities. Show me where people buy their books and I will tell you what sort of life they lead. Book stores always were and are mirrors of the habits and intellectual preferences of men and women.

The private library has ceased to be the pride of the home. Homes have given way to apartments and flats with only little space to spare for book shelves. The garage has taken the place of the library. We see our friends in hotels and clubs, we spend our evenings only rarely at home. Our Age of Electricity and rapid transportation facilities does not permit us to acquire the placid habits of book collectors and of book lovers. Sure enough we read books, because we want to know what their authors have to say. But the author remains a stranger to us, the book once read is done with forever. We speak about automobiles, we look forward to owning a machine, we are building garages with the same enthusiasm that our fathers used to expend on their libraries and their books.

New York is different. But New York is not an American city. It's so near to Europe and its population so distinctly foreign that the change of the last 50 years is hardly noticeable yet in its book shops. Detroit, the old French settlement, which only ten years ago was a tenth of its present size, has no second-hand book shops at all. The Detroit book dealers mete out light summer fiction which fits into people's lunch baskets in the summer and sentimental Christmas carols in the winter. Technical books, automobile literature are their specialties. This is only natural. Ninety per cent of the people are building motor cars in order to make a living; they are the buyers of the technical books. The minority live in order to buy cars and make motor trips, and therefore they need light fiction.

The character of Albany is most truthfully portrayed in its book stores. Our legislators have so much time on

their hands that they actually read historical books, books about Dutch New York, about the Wars of the Revolution, law books, old state records. It is considered good form to collect a historical library after being elected to office and residing in Albany. But curiously enough in these same serious book stores loads of that sort of fiction can be found which smuthounds of the Vice Society are eternally trying to banish from earth. Philadelphia, of course, specializes in Quaker literature; Buffalo, infected by the spirit of near East Aurora, is swamped with the things Elbert Hubbard used to love. Chicago discloses the peculiar love for art, literature and philosophy that its great percentage of German workmen brought over from their fatherland and left as inheritance to the second and third generation. It is almost incredible, yet true, that laborers, coming home from work in the stock yards, stop at the book stalls and buy an add volume of Kant, or Heines' "Ballads and Poems." Chicago always had the finest German books in the country, most likely brought over by the immigrants.

San Francisco has a touch of the East. Books on mysticism, have the honor place. Curious books of all kinds are bought eagerly. Indeed, the book stores here tell you the story of California's strange cults, of its mystics, its prophets and its thousands and one seekers after the hidden truths of the universe.

The last ten years have wrought an astonishing change in the book stores all over the country, but nowhere a sadder and more lamentable one than in Boston, Mass.

Old Cornhill

This oldest street of Boston, the Cheapside of New England, once an important center of city trade, gave Boston its literary charm. In the dilapidated old-time queer buildings, half a dozen book stores invited the lovers of literature. Here was the favorite haunt of the men who gave Boston a literary reputation. It was here in Cornhill that Thomas Burnham founded the first second-hand book shop in the United States in 1825. Young Burnham went from here day after day,

with a basket of books on his arm, to the wharves to trade with sea-faring people. Almost one hundred years have elapsed and the shop is still there. Oliver Wendell Holmes had his chair and desk in "*The Old Corner Book Shop*," and in *Colesworthy's* was a hidden nook where Whittier used to hide for an hour or two, reading newly arrived books, but only rarely buying. "*Littlefield's*" was next door, where Lowell, Longfellow and Emerson used to congregate, talk and occasionally buy additions to their libraries.

But alas! Boston is no more the Athens of America. The book stores on Cornhill have shrunk to the number of four. New buildings have invited modern business to invade the neighborhood. The remaining book dealers, still following the traditions of half a century, are very old men. Their days are counted and soon Cornhill will be remembered as one of the landmarks that have been swept away by the modern spirit and are gone forever.

Burnham's Antique Book Store

Richard C. Lichtenstein, fifty-five years ago an apprentice to old Mr. Burnham, is now the proprietor of the shop. He has many memories of great book days in Boston.

"The most interesting of all my 'finds' since I entered the second-hand book trade in the late sixties," he said (he's a good and entertaining talker), "was the copy of Poe's 'Tamerlaine,' which created a great sensation among collectors. This small pamphlet of forty pages, published by Collin F. Thomas in Boston in 1827, had escaped the searches of the keenest of book collectors. I usually spent my noon hour in other second-hand stores, and one day I found this small pamphlet which I purchased for 25 cents. I had a good many opportunities to dispose of it, but didn't sell it before 1892, in auction. It was knocked down to Dodd, Meade & Co. for \$1,850. 'Tamerlaine' has remained unique among all the books, being today the most costly American book known. I understand a New York bookseller is holding a copy at \$15,000.

"One day, I was offered a small volume which lacked the title and two leaves. There was nothing specially attractive about the book, but the same intuition for which I never could account and that guided me through my whole life as a bookseller, urged me to offer the owner \$2.00, which was readily accepted. Later, I found out that the book was a copy of the Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in New England, Cambridge, 1640. Bishop Hurst bought the book for \$1,000, and after his death, it fetched \$2,500 in the auction of his library. But I have also met with great disappointments. The greatest one was on a visit to an old Boston family residing on Beacon Hill. An elderly lady, the only surviving member of this family, wished to dispose of her library, and I found her seated between two piles of books busily engaged in tearing out the fly leaves wherever they contained any inscriptions. Nothing could induce her to stop this barbaric atrocity. I begged of her to let me examine the fly leaves and titles before she threw them in the open grate. I saw to my grief, John Hancock's inscriptions, and George Washington's presentation to some lady contemporary, revolutionary persons of the first importance. Another opportunity I missed was years ago when Mr. James J. Blaine happened to drop in our shop, selecting a copy of Count Grammont's "Memoirs," asking to have the volume laid aside for him. He wrote his name on the title page and was to call and pay for it on his return to the hotel. The incident must have slipped his memory, for he never returned for the book, and I was foolish enough to erase his signature from the fly leaf. Especially in our days, where "*Association books*" were so very much in demand, Blaine's name in the "Memoirs" would have been a sought after curiosity."

Lauriat's

A sort of Brentano's in Boston. The gathering place of society, of students and of scholars. They carry everything from the rarest book to some new Parisian magazine, whose first number appeared four weeks ago. Mr. Weber, the head of the firm, looks like Napoleon III,

and has the most splendid contempt for everything new in book lore. Mr. Braithwaite was in his shop during my visit and it was astonishing to hear the anthologist of six volumes of new poetry talking a sensible everyday language.

A New and Evil Spirit

Boylston street faces the big park, is a lively promenade, a good deal of shopping is done in its neighborhood, a street always densely populated. *The Garden Side Book Shop* hung out its shingle here, which consists of a huge garden gate.

Women have a good deal to do in public life in Boston, and women are determined to be the intellectual guides of Boston book buyers, at least of such as wish to be "modern" and "up-to-date." *The Garden Side Book Shop* is conducted by women exclusively. I dare say women must also be the chief buyers. The most marvelous and costly bindings on rows and rows of shelves. Books of poetry, novels, anthologies that were never heard of and what is still worse, will never be heard of, are beautifully dressed like brainless women, who wear gowns of Worth or Lady Duff-Gordon. Mrs. Bertha Beckford, one of the proprietors, approached me with the charm of the reception lady in a fashionable hair-dressing establishment, and invited me to inspect "some darling little books, the sweetest ever, just arrived from Paris." I followed her to a little salon done in pink and canary and viewed little miniature books, bound in French crepe, a wallpaper effect. There were French anthologies of bits of poetry and of war sentiment. Dowagers, with grown-up granddaughters, and studded lorgnettes went into fits of ecstasy over the "darling books," and I shouldn't be surprised if they bought some and took them "as much appreciated gifts" to some home for convalescent soldiers and sailors.

Book Shops for Boys and Girls

"Splendid," I thought, seeing the sign next door. The shop where boys and girls can come and choose their

reading. It's located on the fourth floor of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. It looks like a pharmacy. There wasn't a boy or girl in sight. A few old ladies, who must have left the sewing circle on the third floor, were sitting about, reading. I looked around the shelves and I wondered if all the Boston boys and girls lack red blood and the gift of fancy and actually read the books I saw. Miss Alma Howard, one of the dispensers of this shop, told me that all books are being carefully censored and selected by one Bertha E. Mahoney, the director of the Book Shop of the Union. Bertha seemed to be the ruling spirit. She has forbidden such and such books, she has placed others on the blacklist, but she also selected books that ought to be read by boys and girls. I asked what literary qualifications Miss Mahoney had to qualify her for the censoring. All I could gather was the fact that Miss Mahoney is Miss Mahoney, a whilom superintendent of the food shops of the union on the floor below. Needless to say, the union is a highly aristocratic place, frequented exclusively by the flower of Boston's ultra fashionables. Why doesn't someone start a real book store for boys and girls? Accessible to everyone, where second-hand books could be had for ten cents or a quarter?

Every other old building in Boston, and many churches bear honor tablets, telling us that here assembled revolutionists of 1776. The Boston of today, with all its laws of restriction and of censorship, is proud of its ancient rebels. How paradoxical! In talking about laws, a new one has just been enacted. The police apply to the sale of second-hand books the same rule as to the sale and buying of second-hand clothing. A dealer, purchasing books from anyone, has to report the purchase to the police, describe the article purchased and has to wait thirty days before he can sell it. The law requires that each book dealer must pay five dollars for a license. A similar law had been enacted 60 years ago, as a civil war protective measure. Oh, Athens of America! Selling books with a second-hand clothes dealer's license!

Books in Ice Box

Opposite the Copley-Plaza, in a fashionable little building of its own, is the Dorado of America's rejected poets and poetesses, essayists, novelists, free verse artists and of everybody else Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound would press to their bosom. Here is the book shop of the Four Seas Publishing Company, and never was there a greater collection of literary atocrities in one room than in this airy, inviting "Hall of Fame." The soul of Amy Lowell greets one uncannily articulate from the page of each book.

A very ambitious clerk praised the authors of the books higher than genius has ever been praised in America. "We have bought 81 titles from the Badger Publishing Company only recently and have not spared any expense to print the most attractive title and jackets for this new addition to our stock." Everybody knows the Badger books. The Badger Publishing Company gladly accommodates authors of novels and extends to them the privileges of their printing establishment, provided they are willing to pay for publication.

I descended to the basement to see the enormous stock of books the Four Seas Company had acquired. The store must have been occupied by a wholesale florist previously, and the most tremendous ice box I ever saw in my life filled the whole basement. The Badger books, thousands of them, were neatly piled up in the ice box. They were in the proper place, indeed.

The Mysterious Book Shop

On Washington Street is a very attractive book store, conducted by a blind couple. Man and wife about thirty years of age, both totally blind. The shop is scrupulously clean. If you ask for a book, the proprietor will find it in a miraculous way, provided it is on the shelves. If you are browsing about, picking up a book here or there, he will ask you to read off to him the title, and then tell you the price. Both look happy, contented, and seem prosperous.

I wondered how it had happened that they started in the book business, that both of them were blind; had

they been blind before they married or had misfortune overtaken them after their marriage? They're in a strange and mysterious place, but peaceful and harmonious.

1918

Small Town Stuff

WHAT is the mysterious power directing the fates of small town inhabitants? Who is it who sells them the same style of clothes, induces them to furnish their homes so that they resemble one the other like one egg resembles another egg? Who is it who makes the people talk and think alike? Never permitting an individual thought, or an expression of individual opinion?

Everything and everybody seem to be cut after the same pattern. Unessentials are the important things in their lives, and they miss the joy of living. They have not learned to be their real selves. They have not been given a chance. Someone told me once: "America is a young nation. We are about a hundred years behind Europe. Our people have not developed yet the sense for beauty and art." It is not so. America of the fifties of the last century knew the best in life, letters and art. But with the first great fortunes made during the early railroad boom some mysterious powers perverted the minds of America systematically; created in them the lust for sensation, for things of the minute. And today people are being fed with theatres and newspapers and libraries and music and styles, that they really do not want.

They are not given a chance. They must take what these mysterious powers somewhere on Wall Street think good for them, or they can stay at home, lose prestige among their fellow-townsmen, suffer in business and be decried ultimately as "bolsheviks," or "reds."

A few weeks in Milwaukee or any other town of its size will open your eyes. Milwaukee has grown incredibly since 1914, produced several hundreds of war-millionaires and has the aspects of a most thriving, prosperous city.

The people crave for good entertainment, good reading, a glimpse of art. There is an Art Institute heavily subsidized by the city. Its permanent exhibi-

tion is not worth while talking of. Any third-rate dealer in New York can produce such masterpieces from his stockroom. They are hung on the staircases and kept in boxes in the cellar of this Art Institute. The traveling exhibitions are displayed on walls that need cleaning. There is not the atmosphere of appreciation in this building. The main space is occupied by a sort of "rummage exhibit" consisting of all sorts of souvenirs lent by Milwaukeans, who became members of the Institute. Articles that can be purchased often in ten-cent stores are here on exhibition with a card of the proprietor.

The Layton Gallery, next door, is a noble opposite to the Art Institute. Bequeathed to the city by the late Layton, millionaire packer, his hobby during his lifetime, it is a real temple of art. In an imposing purely Greek structure, wonderful masterpieces, collected from all over the globe, almost every known name well represented. Its curator, Mr. George Raab, an artist of fame himself, has never permitted commercialism or provincial small tradesman ambition to enter into his sanctuary. Mr. Raab, who himself selected the greater part of the collection, has the rare sense of the antiquarian. His lectures have aroused a good deal of comment and, incidentally, interest for his gallery. He wishes to make the artist live again in his work. He has given up hope to convert the present generation. His hope is the coming generation. In children and students he tries to arouse a love of beauty and sense of harmony and color.

There is only one bookstore in the real sense of the word in Milwaukee, Des Forges'. Its owner is a bookman of the old type, knows values and authors, has studied his profession in England and France and caters to the collectors and lovers of the printed word.

"The young people don't care for books," he told me. "They do not wish to accumulate libraries. The women-folk come in and ask for 'something nice to read,' and take my word for it. And on occasion they buy nicely bound books for gift purposes." Again here, the mysterious powers behind the throne. The

books that are featured in movie theatres, in installment novels, and in daily papers are the best sellers.

The New Era Shop, that had recently unpleasant introductions to the police department, endeavors to sell radical literature only. Its proprietors are young and therefore hopeful. They may gain, in the course of years, knowledge of books and then select the right sort of stock. It is not radical to lend out George Moore's "A Story Teller's Holyday" for \$5 for a reading, because . . . well radical does not mean immoral or lascivious. The New Era Shop could inaugurate a new Era for Milwaukee book readers if its proprietors would inform themselves about the sort of books worth while introducing to the public. But even to this shop thanks are due. It may lead to something bigger and better.

The department stores advertise their book departments extensively. Here is the great hunting ground for the Chambers and Chesters and Nick Carters and psalm and hymn books. Rosaries are also carried in these book departments.

The public is not given a chance. David Graham Philips and Susan Lenox have just reached Milwaukee and everybody is excitedly discussing the fall and rise of Susan. Several societies for the uplift of poor working girls have been organized as the direct result of the book.

The theatre buildings are magnificent. Modern, airy buildings with comfortable seats and all new improvements that make the sojourn in a showhouse delightful. But the moving pictures shown are again on the level of newspaper fiction stories, of church sermons and of best-selling novels. The millionaire, who is a villain and becomes an honest working man, the poor woman who marries a millionaire, despite his upstart mother's protests, the cowboy who "cleans up" a mining camp and kills a dozen rowdies in order to sink exhausted in the arms of his boyhood sweetheart whom he had deserted years ago . . . and men, women and children sit through all this.

To have dinners by the light of orange-colored

candles while sitting on the floor or on the pillows gracefully grouped about an anaemic poet, who reads ephemeral languid stanzas, belongs to the good taste required in the best circles of Milwaukee.

Smocks and bobbed hair have just made their appearance, and an Art Magazine will soon add the final touches of estheticism.

Small gift shops have been opened by enterprising dealers from Chicago, and there will be food for amusement for years in Milwaukee.

But who will come to this one and to hundreds of other towns and give these good helpless people what they want?

Good books, good plays, good movies and a chance to express their individualities in a healthy, pleasant way?

1919

New York Book Magnates

“**I**F I were rich,” said a well-to-do broker to me recently, “I’d spend a few hours every day in one of those book dens on Fifth Avenue. Their proprietors are delightful people; the surroundings are as comfortable as a club library. Only it is so intimate there, and they always seem to have the very things that one wants—and they are so darned expensive. They seem to be in touch with the whole world, and the mere fact that they always have new things whenever I drop in is sufficient proof that the genus of book-worms is not on the dying-out list, and that people buy costly books even in our times of so many other lures.”

Of course, there are book buyers today who expend thousands and thousands of dollars for rare books, but whom we would not class with the enthusiastic broker who wished to be rich in order to be able to follow his hobby. Rich men often buy their books as investments. They have their brokers who attend auctions for them, and one day we read that Mr. So-and-So bought such-and-such a book for a staggering sum of money, and six months later we receive a catalogue from an auction house telling us that the very same “book lover” will dispose of “duplicates” from his library at auction. And, lo! we find the very same much-advertised rare book in this catalogue. If we compare the price he receives with the price he paid several months ago, we will invariably understand why a stock gambler was induced to become a book-lover.

But, as I said, we still have antiquarians of the old school with us, and we also have book-sellers who have preserved Ben Johnson’s spirit in the book dealers’ guild.

Gabriel Wells

It is not so very long ago that Mr. Wells did not occupy his palatial suite on Fifth Avenue, and the enthusiasm he then had for his books and for their

authors is his today. Fine sets of well-known authors and also of the minor lights, are his specialties. Printed on beautiful papers, wonderfully bound, marvelously extra-illustrated, inscribed by their authors, they are there on his shelves. They seem alive, they seem to talk to you, they seem to smile to you a welcome—if Mr. Wells feels you a friend, a brother lover of books. The whole world knows about Mr. Wells' beautiful sets of books, and whoever wants a rare, unusual edition comes to Mr. Wells, or writes to him, or wires to him, or cables to him, dealers as well as private buyers. And if he has time, he may ask you to view the original manuscript of Robert Louis Stevenson's "New Arabian Nights," or of Victor Hugo's "Ninety Three." Or he will show you a bundle of letters written by Thomas Payne, the draft of a speech in Lincoln's own hand . . . he could fill a museum with the material wrapped up in his safe. And the most delightful thing is the free air of hospitality in his den. I don't know another place where one can lounge around more comfortably . . . and not to forget his assistant, Mr. Royce, the Balzac enthusiast, who compiled the only Balzac bibliography in existence.

Mr. Drake

Opposite the library in a white stucco house with a narrow stairway and gothic arched windows is the sanctum of Mr. James F. Drake. He is a jovial old gentleman who knows more about the first editions of English and American authors than any other book dealer. It is his pride to be the first in New York to specialize in first editions, and he is as well known in London as on this side of the ocean. First editions inscribed by the authors line the book cases along the walls, and rare prints and pamphlets nod and invite you behind their shining glass cases.

Mitchell Kennerley

Some day (I hope in the near future) some one will write a true appreciation of Mitchell Kennerley, the great

Pathfinder in the American publishing field. He has done more for us here than any other English book dealer ever anywhere, with the exception perhaps of Heineman in London. In America, Mitchell Kennerley remains unique. Endless is the list of English and American authors he introduced to his readers for the first time. We know, for instance, that Dutton's sold in one month the complete first edition of Leonard Merrick's collected works, and thousands of copies of his books since. But Mitchell Kennerley introduced him to us twelve years ago, when no one knew his name. Or *Hergesheimer*, a best seller ever since the *Saturday Evening Post* placed him among its regular contributors, but Mitchell Kennerley published his best seller of today many years ago. He gave us the tragic poets Middleton and Davidson, and no one has printed them since. The first part of his catalogue is a roll of honor of the English nineties. He always kept a sharp eye for American contemporary authors, and usually got the best of the work they had done and, I am sorry to say, ever will do. There is Harry Kemp, for instance. He didn't beat his first book yet, published by Kennerley a half dozen years ago. Horace Traubel found his life's dream materialized when Mitchell Kennerley published his diaries With Walt Whitman in Camden. Not to forget Alexander Harvey's masterful short stories. One of them (The Toe) is worth a whole bookshelf of short stories. And dear Michael Monahan, whose charming books he published, whose magazine, *The Papyrus*, he gave a temporary home.

Mitchell Kennerley also claims the honor of having introduced Frank Harris to America.

Possessor of 60,000 Original Drawings

A new type of bookseller has developed during the last twenty-five years—a man who combines part of the knowledge of the antiquarian of yore with the qualities the modern collector and book buyer will request from his agent. Books and literary property have become commercial values equal to stocks which are listed upon the stock exchange; subject to

corners created by shrewd buyers and holders, to fluctuations caused by selling en masse. The successful rare-book dealer of today must operate with his wares like a stock broker. The banker who starts his business with a limited capital and operates on a legal interest basis has very little chance to become rich. But if he succeeds in acquiring with his limited capital the entire stock of a mine which proves a success after he acquired it has equal chances to make money as the rare-book dealer who has had the good fortune to buy for a farthing the entire literary property of a man who proves a celebrity after his death and whose manuscripts are worth a hundred times their weight in gold.

Harry Stone is a book dealer of the new type. He acquired his knowledge here and there. The desire to wander from his earliest youth made him pass the entrance exam into the university of hard knocks. He always loved books. He was always buying books. Eagerly he absorbed books on books, articles about books and authors and . . . Auction Prices Current. After he had acquired a collection of curious books which would fill the shelves of a good-sized store, he started his shop on Fourth Avenue, that avenue that once led to the Astor Library and that was lined with bookshops on both sides.

He not only appreciated the commercial value of books, but he read them. Especially those that were scarce and more valued than other works by the same authors. And he learned to respect the men who wrote these books. His shop became the gathering-place of literature. Wrecked hopes of authors and publishers found in Stone's shop a safe harbor. He paid a fair price for everything of value offered him and soon he was known as the dealer in quaint and curious books and pamphlets.

Good fortune knocked on his door. One rich find came after another. He was able to supply collectors and other book dealers with long-sought-after items.

Recently he acquired the most complete collection of American drawings by magazine illustrators that was ever gathered under one roof. Sixty thousand

specimens of American and foreign artists whose works have appeared in American illustrated magazines he bought from the files of leading publishers.

In an astonishingly short time he made himself acquainted with his new field. He became a walking encyclopaedia of American illustrators. He searched libraries and other resources for biographical data of lesser-known artists whose works are included in his collection. He studied the different periods of art development in America and again he made his shop not only the gathering-place of his customers but an interesting meeting-place of artists and of connoisseurs.

He is very young—not thirty yet—a bright young fellow with a keen sense of appreciation; because he knows that only the good will stand the proof of time and will last and will eventually become a good investment. He knows the border-line between artist and businessman; he never transgresses into foreign territory, and therefore one can call him justly an idealist, at times—when he talks about art.

1919

Snapshots in Art Galleries on Fifth Avenue

Daniel's Gallery

MR. HARTPENCE seems to be the moving spirit of Daniel's Gallery. He is a poet and close associate of Alfred (Mushroom) Kreymborg. He is tenacious, he has convictions of his own and he is silent. "What's the use of convincing others? It is sufficient labor to keep one's own self convinced."

It is a red letter day in the Daniel gallery. Hartpence is behaving nicely to Mr. and Mrs. Davies. The great master is trying to give every man a show. He is studying attentively the electric bells, wires, flags, etc., etc., picturesquely stocked on the canvases. Hartpence points timidly to a canvas apparently depicting five extensions of a town pump done in many colors.

"This is his wife," whispers Hartpence, pointing to a prune-colored pump . . . "This is his friend," pointing to an olive green one.

"There is considerable realism, I see," sighs Davies, quite unconscious of being funny. Mrs. Davies is murmuring something behind her catalogue and trying to live up to her husband's reputation.

Daniel's Gallery is never complete without a primal man walking around. This man is invariably an artist with long hair and a primitive neck. The charming shepherd of the hills is his ambition. Every modern gallery must have long-haired men with big Adam's apples and short-haired women with long necks and pale faces standing around in interesting groups or gazing at a picture in a remote corner in solitary confinement.

At Coady's Gallery

The Coady family is usually found sitting alone at home with their pictures. The only sound heard is the grinding of mechanical devices hanging in their frames. No'isms and no'ismisms are Coady's spe-

cialties. Confusion outside harmony inside are his themes. He is an excellent talker. He does it kindly and patiently and seldom will he be interrupted by his listeners.

Stieglitz' 291

Stieglitz is trying in vain to make a carping friend believe that the pictures on exhibition are a step up from Cezanne or Matisse. If he doesn't like this one, well, here is one not so modern. Why shouldn't he like that. And here is one not so modern even as that one.

Walkowitz is always there agreeing—if he didn't agree he wouldn't be there.

Stieglitz had had a hair cut last week. Stieglitz always has a hair cut when the cold winter winds start to blow.

It is a historical moment each year when Alfred Stieglitz, "specialist of work of all kinds," feels the approach of the cold winter breezes and knows that the time has come to have his hair cut again. Ha! how it will grow until next year, until it has to be cut again. But the Fifth Buddha isn't born yet and Stieglitz's soul still walks three steps ahead of its body.

The Sunwise Turn Bookshop

There they are simply quiet and awfully Batik. Another art shop for art's sake where the returns more than justify us in being artistic. "See this Batik dress, isn't it expressive, why won't people dress like that all the time?" Nobody but a Bahaist or a Rosicrucionist or a Greenacre disciple would be seen dead in it. Then there are books, lots of nice books by nice people and bought by nice people.

The room is decorated in the scheme of a musical chord. A rope would be more appropriate for those who are responsible for its decoration.

At Ehrich's Gallery

It is like stepping from Churchill's on Broadway into the Fifth Avenue Cathedral, if one has spent the

forenoon in the modern art galleries on the Avenue and then walks into Ehrich's. Here is a good healthy commercial atmosphere dealing in the Renaissance. Whether the lights are turned out out of respect for the Annunciation which holds the stage with foot-lights before it or whether Mr. Ehrich recognizes that where people speak with more than bated breath and hushed voices as they do in museums, the lights ought to be lowered, is the question? Here you not only lower your voice, but you study the art of tiptoeing. Madonnas, saints' pictures, and other pictures which will be sainted by virtue of their purchase prices are on the walls.

Please pass the incense pot.

'Way Down in Greenwich Village

THE fad of false Bohemia in Greenwich Village has passed. The purple and orange brand of tearooms and of so-called gift shops where art lovers and artistic people from the Bronx and Flatbush assembled, have gone out of existence. The designers and manufacturers of astounding atrocities who called themselves "modern artists" have disappeared. True there are a few short-haired women left, who parade the streets in their unusual clothes, but they, too, will soon move to other parts of the city with the return of the soldiers, and will resume their real calling in life.

Workers and ambitious strivers have taken possession, once more, of the sacred grounds, where memories and hopes are holy possessions, where so many have worked and toiled and spread an evangel, now accepted universally.

New places have sprung up where idlers find themselves isolated, where enthusiasm and sincerity is written on walls and faces. And people are doing things once more in Greenwich Village. Commercialism seems to have disappeared, and men are willing to help men.

The Paint Box

Mrs. Williams has opened an art gallery, the Paint Box, where anybody may exhibit, anybody who wishes to hang his or her pictures. Everybody is welcome to view the exhibits; who is willing to pay an obolus of ten cents. But it is worth it. And Mrs. Williams has to pay rent and light. Her idea is not new by any means. Five years ago I came to Washington Square and opened what was later called Bruno's Garret. "Here are my walls," I said. "Come and hang your pictures, if you are an artist. Here is my magazine, voice in it your opinion of any subject you may choose, if you are a writer. Here is an auditor-

ium with comfortable chairs; come and recite your poems, face your critics, if you are a poet. . . ."

I charged nothing for all of this, no admission fees, no wall space rates. I did not sell or try to sell anything. But I believe that Mrs. Williams' plan is better. The small admission fee will not interfere with the number of visitors, and the altruistic motive therefore less evident, and more ready acceptance by the people. Her galleries are spacious, light, airy rooms in No. 44 Washington Square. The walls are hung with pictures. Pictures everywhere. Small and large. In oil and water. Miniatures and life-sized paintings; cubist and conventionals; foreign and familiar; so many pictures on each wall that there is not enough space for the proverbial pin to glide through and fall to the floor.

We met old acquaintances on the walls. There was Glen Coleman, in our estimation the best of the younger artists in America. He is painting in oil now. My readers will remember my frequent references to Coleman's pen and ink sketches, to his street scenes, especially his sketches of Greenwich Village. There is so much peace and life in his work. His houses tell stories. His old lantern lighting the corner of a narrow street somewhere on the East Side becomes familiar and we grow really attached to it.

Coleman has a genius for depicting the eternal in the fleeting moments of life. He seems far above men and things. His brush is dipped in love. He is the only American artist who gives grandeur to the poverty of every day life on city streets.

Stuard Davis has some of his latest works there. A cemetery. I have forgotten where it is situated, very appealing with its crosses and stones. on a sloping hill bathed in sunrays. This cemetery is perhaps unique in the world. No remains of weary travelers repose beneath the crosses. They were erected by loving hands, while the loved one perished in some strange land or on the sea. And nothing but the sad news of their death has come as a last message to friends and relatives.

He has a musician there whose nose is bleeding. We sympathize with the stricken musician.

Bobby Edwards, the singer of the village, hung a few ukeleles and some very eye-fetching pictures.

Have you ever heard of that master of the lost art of wood engraving, Gustave Baumann, and his incomparable scenes of cities from all over the Union. "Gloomy Gus" he was called in the West, this untiring artist who wanders from city to city cutting his own wood blocks, printing them on his old hand press, always independent, always free, an eternal traveler. He struck New York and the Village and left his card in the shape of a few leaves that attract attention the very minute we enter the room.

Howard Heath's pictures, which remind so very much of the work of Acton Davies during the cubist craze, are right near Ezra Winter's "The Philosopher." The Philosopher is a gentleman commonly called a bum. He is seated near a beach, taking a foot-bath in the splashing waves, and staring meditatively at a tiny daisy in his grisly, awkward hand.

And fifty other artists of whom the world will hear some day (or never) have accepted the invitation of Elvin Williams and have joined her happy family in the Paint Box. And she, herself? No, she has not short hair. She is not an old maid, not eccentric. Nothing wrong with her. A charming young woman, even dressed as any other one above Fourteenth Street. She had an idea, she said. The idea seems to work out all right.

President Harding's Favorite Book

PRESIDENT-ELECT HARDING was, and is, a newspaper man. Thank God for that. He knows life as it is, and as it appears to be in the press. The man who knows how to read our newspapers has won half of the battle. And newspaper men are generous and excellent judges of men.

Harding smokes cigarettes. This puts him in a different class. Look out for the man who warns you against cigarettes. Who tells you (on offering him your case) with a superior smile: "Thanks, I don't use them."

Sometimes I will sing a song of hate against those black cigars of the sedate and of the respectable. I loathe the cigar of the habitual smoker, so justly characterized by Schopenhauer as a stimulant of thought for people who do not think. Not one smoker of cigarettes ever arrives at that low level of enjoyment.

To smoke a cigar is not much more than a hobby. The cigarette is a passion, a vice.

The cigarette is intoxicating. If one inhales the aromatic smoke, draws it deep into one's lungs, into blood and nerves, one feels that this narcotic wonder-poison liberates the soul from a profane pressure, and one's spirit is lured to lighter and brighter regions. Intoxication is the sweet magic of the cigarette, and, therefore, the cigarette is inseparable from all extravagant enjoyments. The cigarette is in the gambling den. It can be found always where they drink champagne. It is a part of frivolity, of sin, of the poetry of enjoyment. Its aromatic fragrance, the tender rings that vanish swiftly into grotesque figures The cigarette is the perfume of the boudoir.

The cigarette smoker never looks for a stronger brand, as the consumer of cigars, who methodically tans his tongue with his weed. The cigarette smoker increases his daily ration, and finally smokes between the courses of his meal, between his kisses. . . . In

the green room of theatre and concert room, you can see him hungrily reaching for his silver case, the gift of his beloved. He awakens in the night and lights his cigarette, and what peace and joy after each long draught of the sweet redeeming bewilderment. That's quite different from that brown, ill-smelling butt, chewed from one corner of the mouth to the other, lighted again and again, until it has happily dissolved itself into ashes. A bedroom filled with smoke: a long story of enlightenment to the one who knows. The cigarette fits in our nervous times. A nervous pleasure for a nervous people. We smoke cigarettes because we are nervous. We are nervous because we smoke cigarettes.

How beautiful they look, golden, tender threads enclosed in fragile rice paper, like a lovely woman's beautiful hair, fragrant and tempting. Compare them with the most beautiful box of cigars. Those black, strong-smelling cigars, carcasses of leaves transformed into mummies. Think of the men who smoke them, and tell me isn't there some similarity?

In some Sunday paper, I read that Mr. Harding's favorite book was written by Edgar Saltus. You rack your brains? You don't remember Saltus? Twenty years ago, he was hailed as the coming American novelist. At least twenty books of his appeared in short succession. Today he is known almost exclusively to the booklover. First (often the only) editions of some of his books are in demand and sell at fancy prices, while others can be found at the book bargain counters of Liggett's Drug Stores at twenty-five cents a copy. His *Magdalene* appeared at the time of Oscar Wilde's visit to America. Both men met here, in London and Paris. Critics contend that Wilde received from this book his inspiration for *Salome*. There are pages and pages of great similarity in both books. Saltus' *Magdalene* is a fine contribution to the world's literature of *Magdalenes*. In all his books there is a touch of the French eighties, and a resemblance with the English nineties. If Saltus had not been a scholar, he would be another George Moore.

Only a connoisseur can take a fancy to Saltus, a man who has a fine sense for literature and for life.

I love to think of the newspaper man with literary inclinations smoking his cigarette, while reading one of Saltus' books, in his study in the White House.

1920

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